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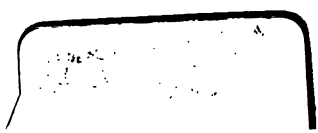
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HUMILITY
A TALE BY
Mrs. HOFLAND


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HUMILITY.


HUMILITY.



A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE.

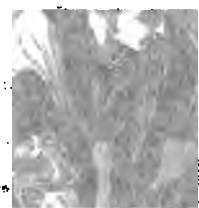
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HUMILITY:

A TALE.

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HUMILITY:

A Tale.

By MRS. HOFLAND.



LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1868.

250. b. 148.

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HUMILITY.

I.

The Evil of Pride.

"WHILST you are in the village, Barnet," said Mrs. Livingstone to her maid, "could you not contrive to call and see Jane Hide?"

"To be sure I can, ma'am, if so be *you* desire it."

A look of affirmation sufficed; and the spruce Abigail set out upon various errands. Scarcely had she closed the door, when Miss Livingstone observed, in a tone of angry contempt, "I can't imagine, dear mother, how you bear that girl's airs. Since she came to live here, she has become so grand, that I believe she will scarcely speak to her former associates."

"So I understand; for which reason I told her to call at the cottage, where probably many of her happiest hours have been spent. It may have a tendency to awaken better feelings. She has many good points in her character, but I must own is weak enough to be proud."

"And what can be so detestable, so ridiculous, indeed so shameful, as pride in a servant? A lady's maid, who gained education at a charity school, and secures bread by dressing hair and washing lace! A *servant's* pride is really—really—"

"Almost as bad as a lady's—you were going to say."

The young lady blushed very much, and remained silent for a few minutes; when, with the air of one who had conquered the petulance lately observable in her manners, she said, "Surely, dear mother, pride is more unbecoming in a dependant than it can possibly be in a person differently situated? I do not say it is a good thing in any one. Yet pride has its uses."

"I think with you, my dear, that pride is frequently less *becoming* in the maid than the mistress; because the latter, being the better educated, knows how hateful it appears, and therefore contrives to modify it; and if she is a good and consistent woman, subdues and eradicates it entirely. We are all born with certain dispositions, which it is our duty to foster or control. Some are by nature more proud and passionate than others; and it would be cruel and unjust, in those who are by nature meek and placable, to condemn the *very young* for faults in which they are not likely to err themselves, from the absence of constitutional temptation; but in time we ought to expect that every person, gifted with a sound understanding, and a religious education, will subdue this noxious weed in their bosoms, root and branch."

"Few persons can do this for themselves," observed Mr. Livingstone, who had been rather sitting with a book in his hand than reading, "very few indeed,

without those aids God sends us all, more or less—the aids of sickness and sorrow, disappointment and regret. By these things we are chastened and humbled, and taught to see that 'pride was not made for man.'"

Mr. Livingstone spoke with the tone of a man oppressed by sorrow, and with a slow step left the room. His daughter was about to remark, that her father had relapsed into affliction for her only brother, who had died about two years before; when her mother, commenting on his words, observed,—"Yes, it is true, God in his providence does thus subdue many proud spirits, and impart the grace of humility to many wounded hearts. But this discipline is certainly not called for in all cases, nor, I fear, found effective in all. We see many more severe sufferers than patient sufferers; and we see gentle, good, and self-subdued persons among those who have known very little earthly trouble. I don't know how it may be with others, but I never feel more humbled, more sensible of my own unworthiness, than when God's mercies seem, in some particular manner, showered upon me."

"I have frequently felt humbled myself in that sense; but I can't see that the humility we all feel, I apprehend, in a religious sense, has much to do with our fellow-creatures. I think respect to one's self a duty; and so far as pride preserves us from mean actions, it must be a good thing," said the young lady.

"Yet never was proverb more true than that which says, 'Pride and meanness go together.' Proper self-respect, the dignity of conscious integrity, the high-minded traits of sentiment or action, which belong to innate nobleness of spirit, and are proofs of the best principles we can adopt, are perfectly compatible with humility. Who ever exhibited these traits in such

perfection as the early Christian martyrs? and surely we cannot doubt their humbleness of spirit any more than their magnanimity."

"Yes; but we live in such a different era of the world, that we can benefit little by their example; and what can be more disgusting, I had almost said wicked, than for people to set themselves up as suffering under persecution, and whining about the 'burden of their sins,' when they are living in the enjoyment of every comfort, unmolested by any one, and very frequently in the midst of their affectation of humbleness, being to their servants, dependants, and children, positive tyrants? Then they never hesitate to condemn every person, save their own *clique;* always look at the dark side of even a good action; quote the Scriptures with the authority of the Scribes and Pharisees; and, on the strength of a plain bonnet and a mild voice, 'deal damnation round the land,' with a freedom that looks very like anticipated enjoyment in the prospect."

"No, no, Blanche; they do not deserve such sweeping censure, even when they assume a virtue which they have not. The human heart has so many self-delusions, that when we see our fellow-creatures act wrong, we ought not to conclude they *mean* wrong in points of this nature.

"Surely it is fair to attack the censorious with their own weapons? Why should they not be taught to feel at least a portion of the pain they give, when they deride and condemn people, who are probably far better than themselves, in every point of view? Besides, if humility is a necessary attainment in a religious sense, and a difficult attainment to many—since these persons, by their pretensions, disgust the sincere, and by their

condemnations distress the timid—do they not increase the evil by making the honest—who may happen to be also the self-willed—more rebellious, and say, 'I'll none of it?'"

"This may be done, and I fear is done in some cases. But I trust in others self-examination is induced, and that will lead us all to see so much to condemn in the folly of proud thoughts, and the weakness of ambitious wishes, that our good sense alone would dictate the value of discipline to the mind on this point. But when, as sinful creatures, we prostrate ourselves before God, entreating him to 'put a new spirit within us,' and reposing on him for that change which we feel unequal to effecting, yet earnestly desire to possess, we are far more likely to attain the grace of humility."

The re-entrance of Mr. Livingstone checked conversation, and drew the eyes of his daughter again to the expression of his countenance, which was that of subdued but present sorrow.

This was not only painful to his affectionate daughter, but somewhat surprising, for she had had reason to believe, that both time and religious resignation had operated beneficially upon his mind in reference to the loss of her brother; and there was no other circumstance in the history of his life that could account to her for his anxious looks. On turning towards her mother, it struck her that she looked very pale; and this, together with the serious tone of her late conversation, gave the idea of both being in some sort of trouble, not yet revealed to her.

Perhaps we had better make the reader acquainted with it, in the first place, as he is still ignorant of the parties.

II.

The Mysterious Claimant.

THE Honourable Richard Livingstone was the third son of Lord Beautree, and in early life destined for the army by his mother, "because he was tall and handsome;" whilst his father decided, "that he ought to follow a learned profession, because he really had a head for it, and might one day cut a figure in the House of Commons." Upon the second son's determination to purchase a commission and go abroad, this plan was decided upon, and Richard became a student at Oxford for the bar.

The property of Lord Beautree was somewhat singularly situated, although that of more than one noble family is in similar circumstances. Lady Beautree was an heiress, and the daughter of an Earl, whose pleasure it was to enrich her second son, on condition of his taking the family name of Livingstone. Accordingly Hugh, the second son, was endowed from infancy with the name of his grandfather; and expectations were formed on the subject of one or other of the Earl of Livingstone's titles being granted him; so that the second son was always a person of as much consideration as the eldest. The very existence of a third would have been forgotten, though he was in every respect

the most promising child, if he had not been strikingly like his grandfather, who was therefore induced to notice him, and at his death bequeath him a very handsome addition to a younger brother's portion. To this, in his seventeenth summer, a considerable legacy was added by his godfather, who had always pitied him, as an amiable, but neglected boy.

Two sisters had been born to his parents after himself; and in the kindness he always exhibited towards them, his disposition was proved and his affections developed; but in proportion to the warmth of attachment to them, the disgust he could not fail to contract towards brothers placed so much above him grew also. His own nature was essentially loving and gentle, and that which he felt he inspired. Few young men were more beloved amongst his brother students than Richard Delaval; few more approved by the tutors of his college, for he had application, not less than talent. Whether he would hereafter so use his attainments as to overtake his brothers in their more fortunate position was doubtful; for he had apparently little ambition, and naturally a good deal of contempt for that world, which for many years had followed the example of his parents, and held him at a distance.

When his second brother went into the army, and exposed himself to the dangers of an Indian campaign, Richard became of somewhat more consequence in the eyes of his father. But his mother was aggrieved by the circumstance of "his features being so like her father's, whereas Hugh ought to have had them;" and she regarded this possession as a species of robbery it was difficult to forgive in *him*, "though she might have done it in the case of her eldest son, to whom his grandsire had given nothing." It was evident that

both parents rather envied him the money—which, in fact, relieved themselves, and was a mere trifle, in comparison with the endowments to which their elder sons were born—than rejoiced in the power it bestowed, of maintaining even comparative rank with them. Lady Beautree never lost an opportunity of draining his pocket for expensive presents to his sisters; and his lordship frequently expressed his fear, "that, without the stimulus of poverty, he would never rise at the bar."

When this young man was about twenty-two, he formed an acquaintance with a gentleman in declining health, at Cheltenham, to which place he had taken a college trip. Mr. Heatherstone had two daughters, one of whom was on the point of marriage to a baronet, with whom he had been intimate on his first going to Oxford, and he was therefore induced to make one of the wedding-party.

The bustle and gaiety attendant on the marriage, united to the pain of parting with his eldest daughter, increased the complaints of the invalid, and called back the youngest to his aid. In the tenderness of her solicitude, the cheerfulness with which she endured confinement, and bore with the occasional petulance, or affecting complaints of her only parent, young Delaval at once saw the beauty and value of family attachment, and his own most unmerited estrangement from its holy delights. Day after day he shared the cares and partook the rewards of Blanche, whom he considered in the light of a ministering angel to her declining father, and he trusted, held himself as a friend and brother; but it was not until Mr. Heatherstone was suddenly ordered to the south of France, that he became aware of his own situation, as being "gone whole ages in love," and finding parting impossible.

It is probable that the anxious daughter was little less affected than himself, by the circumstance of their parting, for she had for many weeks known no other consolation than his society, as her sister was gone to Paris, and from thence would make the tour of Switzerland. In this season of awakened feeling, all was explained, and seeing neither disparity of circumstance, age, nor family, could be pleaded, Mr. Heatherstone gave a warm consent, Lord Beautree a cold one; and a hasty marriage, and anxious journey, commenced on the same day.

Every circumstance combined to knit the hearts of the parties more closely together. They were indeed the "threefold band that cannot be broken;" for unquestionably, the affectionate regard of Mr. Delaval for his new and truly affectionate father, was only exceeded by the tender admiration and glowing esteem with which he regarded his lovely and most excellent daughter. It appeared to his long chilled and repulsed bosom as if he only now began to live; and he would unquestionably have been in danger of becoming intoxicated with happiness, if the sufferings of his aged friend had not corrected that youthful buoyancy of spirit, which exulted in the happiness it received and imparted.

For three succeeding years, the tenderness and activity of this amiable pair, aided by the climate, prolonged the life of him they loved so truly, and who had only one earthly wish ungratified, that of seeing their offspring, —a desire the more natural, because this blessing was still denied to his eldest daughter, the state of whose health precluded hope. It so happened, however, that at the same time that the medical attendant of Mrs. Delaval had pronounced his wife beyond the period of casualties, and likely to become the healthy

mother of a healthy child, that Mr. Delaval was summoned to England by his father, on account of the death of his second brother.

"This is a great trial," said the invalid; "but it is softened to me by the grant of many an anxious prayer. I see you must go immediately; but you will not expose Blanche to the danger of travelling in her present situation?"

"I will not. Neither will I subject myself to the agony of leaving her during a season of anxiety to us all. My brother's estates so evidently descend to me, and my good grandfather provided so expressly for the present contingency, that I am persuaded no person would think of disputing my rights; but if they did—nay more, if they were likely to do it with effect, no power on earth should induce me for a moment to hesitate between the duty I owe my wife and you, and the happiness I seek to enjoy as a father, with an accession of fortune hitherto unexpected, and, in fact, unnecessary."

"You have indeed given proof, my son, that you could dispense with the pomps and vanities of life. Nevertheless, fortune is a blessing, since it extends the power of being useful to others; and without being dissipated, both you and my daughter have much to enjoy, I trust, in your own country, when the long task you have fulfilled so nobly and kindly is concluded, which must now be very soon, for the events of to-day have been agitating."

Mr. Livingstone—as we may now call him—indeed perceived this to be the case, and endeavoured to prepare his wife for that change, which, however long it may have been expected, or however desirable as a release to the sufferer, always seems sudden when it

arrives, and awakens sorrow in the survivors, more acute than they apprehended possible. Within a week Mr. Heatherstone died. When the mourners had laid him in a foreign grave, they prepared to return to the land of their birth by slow journeys; for their spirits were untoned for the gaieties of life, and they were anxious to show due respect to the memory of the departed.

Mr. Heatherstone had divided his property equally between his daughters, but provided that his estates should descend uninjured to his grandchildren,—a disposition which could not fail to give satisfaction. The long-divided sisters were now anxious to meet; therefore the first place to which our exiles hastened, was the seat of Sir Wilmot Bertie, in Kent, from whence it would be easy for Mr. Livingstone to make those visits to the metropolis which the situation of his affairs might render necessary.

It soon became apparent that the late possessor of the estates had injured them as far as it had been in his power, and that several years must pass before they would produce such an income as would justify the present possessor in seeking to fulfil the testator's will, by trying to resuscitate the extinct titles. This information was given by Lord Beautree, who had probably no great desire to see the son he had slighted placed above him in the peerage, although he had long condemned his conduct in resigning a profession in which ambition frequently attains its goal. Of his motives his son at this time thought little, for he was struck with the grievous alteration in his person and health, and deeply wounded by learning that his eldest brother's extravagance had impoverished his father, and finally compelled himself to become a wanderer on the Continent, leaving

to that unhappy father the task of settling disreputable debts, soothing broken hearts, and enduring the reproaches of his wife for having indulged so fatally that son, who had never been *her* favourite.

"So you are married," said her ladyship, "they tell me, to a very presentable sort of person? You stayed an immense time with her old father; but I suppose he has left her all he had as a reward?"

"He made a very just will, dividing his property equally between his daughters."

"I call that *unjust*. How are you to enter the world as a Livingstone ought to do?"

"My own fortune is unimpaired; Mr. Heatherstone's country seat is mine; and there, for the greatest part of the year, we shall live."

"A great comfort you will be to us!—a great credit to your family!"

"I trust I shall bring no *discredit* upon it, madam; as the representative of an excellent—"

"Representative! Oh, you will go into Parliament?"

"It is not improbable. The Heatherstones were generally members for the county for some centuries."

"How can you talk of the Heatherstones who have become a Livingstone; and I must say, grown more like my father than ever. Have you any recollection of him?"

"A very vivid one. I was proud of his notice. He used to pat my head, and call me 'an honest little fellow,' and praise me for telling the truth. I remember his words as if they were spoken yesterday."

"And very good words they were at that time, when you were destined to a plebeian state in society. He little foresaw the loss his family were to sustain; a loss that can never, *never* be made up to me."

Lady Beautree put her handkerchief to her eyes, and Mr. Livingstone took his departure, wondering whether parental partiality would ever make him as blind as his mother had been to the faults of a son, whose personal courage had been the one redeeming point in a character of overbearing pride, and a selfishness that knew no bounds of principle or feeling in the indulgences it demanded. The feelings of his father were evidently of a very different nature. He saw his own error in a partiality to his eldest son, which had not prevented due regard to his second, but had operated so far as to produce coldness and neglect to the one, who in early life had been always on the watch for kindness, and grateful if but the shadow was granted, and whose warm heart had been compelled, by the coldness of his family, to bestow its affections upon others. He might be truly said to repent this error; but he concluded, very falsely, that amendment was too late.

Our review of this family must be hasty. Mr. Livingstone strictly pursued the line of conduct he had pointed out to himself, and which his young and lovely wife, notwithstanding the admiration she excited, and the full approbation of Lady Beautree, never tempted him to transgress. Blanche was born at Heatherstone Hall, in Gloucestershire, the home of her mother; but it was not till the birth of a son, two years afterwards, that Mr. Livingstone found himself justified in entering upon the duties and expenses of a senator, and taking a house in London.

As Mrs. Livingstone had no other children, the care and attention of parents so attached to each other, and so domestic, were necessarily given to them with more than the usual solicitude of parents so circumstanced; and few could more fully find the reward of their cares

in the improvement and capacity of their offspring. Together with the learning and accomplishments demanded by their station in life, they had never failed to inculcate a knowledge of religion, and to nourish the virtues which spring out of it, and are the only proofs of its existence in the heart which can be manifested to others. They alike, at this time, held themselves deeply indebted to the endearing, and yet awful lessons they had received on their entrance into life, from the long-suffering father to whom they had been so fondly devoted, and they were anxious to convey the benefit to their children, without the pain and anxiety through which they had themselves received it.

Blanche was, from her birth, a fine, healthy, lively, and handsome child. Amedie, who was named after his grandfather, was a pretty delicate boy, of most amiable temper and manners, full of application, and with a good understanding, but with less quickness than his sister. This circumstance, added to the fragility of his form, induced Mr. Livingstone to determine on keeping him at home, under the care of a tutor, and the benefit of his own observations; for however great the advantages of a public school might be to those quick-witted and ardent-spirited boys whose talents demand a wide field, and whose tempers require a strict discipline, he thought his gentle Amedie called for different treatment. The shower which affords nutriment to a strong plant, may destroy a frail one.

It was well that a resolution, disapproved by many self-constituted advisers, was acted upon; for when the child was about twelve years of age, he exhibited decided symptoms of disease; and, after two years of varying hopes and fears, in which the life of the father was "bound up in his boy," and all other pleasures,

occupations, and almost duties, merged, and in which the sweetness of his disposition, and the holiness of his endurance, had rendered him beloved, almost to idolatry, even by the lowest servant, poor Amedie breathed his last.

At this juncture, whatever might be the sufferings of the parents, that of the sister apparently exceeded them. The young are full of hope, and death is little known to them. However long had been the illness, and evident the weakness of her brother, she could not believe that he would be thus entirely taken, until she witnessed it; and her lamentations were as violent as her attachment had been ardent. It was no wonder her love surpassed that which we all have felt for a brother, for she had only *one*. They had never been divided for a day; and her habit, from his very cradle, of extending protection to him, in the first place, as being younger, and in the next, as being an invalid, had rendered him the more endearing, so that her very heart seemed rent in twain when thus divided.

In one sense, this excess of sorrow was beneficial to her parents, for they forgot themselves that they might soothe and console her whose affliction was so natural and so merited, and who was now become their all. In order to divert her mind and preserve her health, they made various journeys, entered more into company than was agreeable to their own feelings, and when they perceived that she was better, permitted her to accept invitations from various friends who sympathized in their affliction, and concluded justly, that in the society of persons of her own age, she would be most likely to regain her spirits, and find happiness by the exercise of her affections.

Blanche was, in truth, a mourner longer than most

girls of her age would have been, and the severity of her feelings for a season robbed her cheek of its roses. Nevertheless, health and gaiety of heart returned to her, as might and ought to be the case in early life, long before it could be in any degree shared by her parents, although they sought earnestly for consolation where only it can be found. But resignation, as a duty, must be long exercised before the ease of content is ingrafted upon it. We may become happy after an affliction of this nature; but, perhaps, we never can enjoy the same kind or degree of happiness we have known before it.

Two years had now passed. Blanche was in her seventeenth year. She was tall, beautiful, and graceful in person; generous, kind-hearted, and lively in disposition; willing to be stationary at home, and evidently anxious to be all their hearts could desire to the parents who loved her so entirely. Notwithstanding these amiable dispositions, when the parents could examine the conduct of their darling more narrowly, both were painfully sensible, that a feeling of self-importance was of late added to their daughter's character, which was the thing of all others they would have deprecated for her, since, both by precept and example, they had ever inculcated *humility* as the necessary consequence of Christianity.

That this should be the case was not surprising, since the very care and kindness with which her sick spirit had been nursed, and the knowledge of her situation as an only child, would show her value in her own family; but to this was added, from many others, the flattery her person excited, the homage given to her condition as an heiress, and the commendations bestowed upon her accomplishments, which certainly exceeded the general *routine* of female acquirements, because she had

shared the lessons given to her brother. So far, therefore, as she had seen the world, it had had a tendency to inspire pride and foster vanity, at that age when the character is forming, and propensities become passions in the rapidity of their growth.

But most happily, Blanche retained that strong sense of religion, and that conscientious observance of its precepts, which belong to self-control. She desired to be a Christian, not only in word, but in deed; and so insensibly had this habit of self-approval crept upon her that she was utterly unconscious of its evil tendency, and mistook the pride that occasionally swelled her bosom, for a sense of justice to herself, and the station she held, or would hold hereafter, in society. She was too inexperienced to know that pride is the parent of anger, contempt, injustice, and even cruelty; that it hardens the heart, blinds the understanding, and induces us to call "evil good, and good evil." It is a perversion of words, when we say, "He was too proud to do a mean action;" for pride and integrity, though they may exist in the same bosom, and may by turns predominate, have no natural connection.

On the contrary, pride is continually tempting us to the extravagances, the ambitious imitations, which involve both meanness and dishonesty. Pride teaches us to depreciate others, in order to exalt ourselves, renders us rebellious to those above, despotic to those below us, disposes us to envy rank and wealth, and despise even the most worthy or talented in a humbler walk of life; and when it has most unhappily insinuated its baneful leaven into the bosom of those who are more especially professors of religion, its language becomes to every one, in regard to inward feeling, "Stand off, for I am holier than thou."

No! integrity, magnanimity, munificence, all the more noble train of moral virtues, may indeed, I confess with sorrow, be found occasionally *with* pride, but they are not of it. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made," not only without but within; and He alone "who knoweth what is in man," can read aright the prevailing motives of actions, and those various stirrings of the mind, which in early life we rarely analyze. Few can look back, and calmly examine the feelings of bygone days, without seeing how much of error, particularly as regards pride, has caused them to commit sin before God, and injury towards man, which at the time appeared very venial errors in their sight. "I was very petulant with my maid yesterday, but then I was previously put out of humour;" "I was unkind in treating my sister's request so harshly, but I will not do it again," are the minor self-reproaches of an ingenuous young person, of daily recurrence. But in after years, when the turmoil of life is over, and we earnestly desire to purify our hearts, and render them acceptable offerings to the "Saviour who bought us," how differently do we estimate the faults and follies then viewed so lightly!

The pride that awakened petulance of temper, haughtiness of manner, contempt of one man's abilities, of another's fortune, the coldness with which we viewed the sorrows of an inferior, the eagerness with which we retailed scandal against a superior, even our airs of coquetry and assumption, wounding the feelings of one, or shocking the innocent gaiety of many, pass in review before us, as sources of sorrow, and demanding sincere and frequently bitter repentance, and we see clearly that pride was the root of all.

And who can retrieve the past? who atone for one

angry word or one disdainful look? blushes, apologies, and tears, avail not towards those who have gone down to the dust before us. Nor will it console our hearts to say, "that we have endured more from some than we have inflicted on others." With the recollection of injuries received, we have nothing to do, save "to forgive and forget;" but injuries *committed* demand our sincere sorrow, our humble penitence before God. They are wounds in the heart, and like those received in the body, are slow to heal in aged subjects.

Surely then it is wise and kind to warn the young against the encroachments of a passion, alike contrary to the religion they all profess, in a greater or lesser degree inimical to their earthly happiness, and so injurious to their hopes of eternal happiness, that it seems absolutely incompatible with any rational, much less scriptural notions on the subject.

But I have wandered from my story, though not from my subject. Bear with me, ye young and dear ones, for whom my heart labours, and has long laboured, with all a mother's yearnings and a teacher's anxieties. In a little while that heart must cease to beat for you, and the withered hand now obeying its dictates, lie mouldering in the dust.

It might be truly said that Mr. and Mrs. Livingstone had but one desire and one opinion with respect to their daughter; but there was more of alarm in the mother's mind than in that of the father, because she probably saw more of what was stirring in that of her daughter, who was naturally very ingenuous, and of course spent more time with her than with him. Carefully watching any opening that might arise for the expression of her sentiments on this subject, Mrs. Livingstone yet avoided entering into any remonstrance or

lecture upon it, well knowing that she might thereby awaken the very spirit she sought to allay. But at this time her heart was full of sorrow from other causes, and she intended the foregoing conversation to prepare, in some degree, that of her daughter for a painful communication, which would demand all her fortitude to bear in the first place, and render the attainment of humility not less necessary to insure patient endurance in the event.

We have seen that Mr. Livingstone succeeded as the possessor of the Livingstone estates, about seventeen years before this time, during which period he had not only cleared them from incumbrances, but added to the original value; and as every parent is in some degree ambitious for his child, however contented he may be with the station held by himself, he will not deny that during a certain period of his poor boy's life, he had formed a wish for securing to him the title of his grandfather. To this, however, the estates in question would not have been an adequate support, without curtailing the portion he felt to be due to Blanche; therefore, contrary to the desire often expressed by his mother, he took no steps for this purpose. When poor Amedie s health became hopeless, the idea vanished from his mind, and he continued to live nearly up to his income, as a man who held the goods of life not more for himself than others, as father, master, and patron, but more especially as an almoner of the poor and the afflicted, the infant and the aged.

During all this period, no doubt had arisen, or apparently could exist, of his title to the estates; and however angry his elder brother might be, the will of his grandfather and his father and mother's original concurrence with it, prior to his marriage, alike tended to

render the property in every sense of the word his own. Great, therefore, was his astonishment, when a lawyer arrived at his house, to announce the existence of another heir to the Livingstone estates, in the person of his late brother's daughter, who was probably now on her way to England.

It had been well known to the elder brother and parents of the late Captain Livingstone, that he had formed a strong attachment to a young woman, whose parents were in a very humble situation, and who had wisely opposed her acquaintance with one so much her superior in station, since his general character gave little promise of an honourable termination to the affair. It was this circumstance which had in some degree reconciled Lady Beautree to the absence of her darling son, since she considered all the evils he might encounter from the climate, or the battle-field, trifling, when compared with the ignominy of such an union. When, therefore, he determined hastily to enter the army and join a far distant regiment, every facility was given to his wishes, although his removal was afflictive to both parents, and, in the eyes of his elder brother, ridiculous. Little more than a year afterwards, he was informed by the sorrowing parents of the young woman in question, that she had fled, they knew not whither, but strongly suspected that she had by some means gone out to the East Indies. Knowing the difficulties of such an undertaking, and having never received any intimation of even a wish on the subject from his brother, Mr. Delaval concluded that the extraordinary beauty of Mary Denton had attracted a new admirer, who had been more successful in eluding the vigilance of her parents than his brother, to whom he made no communication on the subject, in order to save him from vexation. In

truth, he was at the time so much harassed by his creditors and other claimants, that the affair was soon altogether dismissed from his memory.—What were the sufferings of parents, whom he had not injured, to him! he had quite enough to do with those on his own hands.

The affair was neither communicated to the brother at Cambridge, nor commented upon in his presence afterwards. He therefore listened to the details with an air of incredulity in the first place, notwithstanding the known respectability of Mr. Walter, who was Lord Beautree's man of business, and who placed before him information, meant, in the first place, for the ear of that nobleman, whose state of health precluded him from attending to it.

From documents received from the Government-house in Bengal, it appeared that Mary Denton, either lured by letters from her far-distant lover, or inspired by a passion for him as violent as lamentable, had succeeded in procuring a passage to India, by going out as the attendant to two young ladies leaving school in England, and returning to their parents; that on her proceeding up the country, and after many hardships and difficulties, reaching her lover, she had been received by him with apparent transport; but to her bitter disappointment, on learning through what medium she had reached him, he protested that it was impossible he could disgrace himself by marrying her, society, in the country where they then were, rejecting such *mésalliance* still more imperatively than in England; his health had become so bad, that he was negotiating for the purpose of returning to his family, and he certainly could not be accompanied by a wife whom they never would receive.

The conduct of this unhappy girl had been such, in

the family whom she attended, and with whom she had been under the necessity of remaining a few months after her arrival, as to have insured their friendship. The wife of the General, to whom she had been more particularly consigned by them, became so interested by her overwhelming sorrow, her youth, simplicity, and the difficulties she had encountered, that she influenced her husband in recommending Captain Livingstone to fulfil either the actual or implied engagement, which had rendered her an ungrateful daughter and an outcast wanderer.

"Life travels fast in burning climates, and it has already reduced you to premature age," said the General. "Where will you meet with so true a friend, so careful a nurse, as this lovely young woman, whose manners are pleasing, whose history is unknown, save this—she has ventured all for love?"

"Not unknown to myself, sir. My protection, in every sense of the word, she shall have—a handsome provision too, in case of my death."

"That you owe her, certainly. For anything further, we will not trouble you; she is a British subject, and must be cared for as such. My house is henceforth her home."

Some months afterwards, the Honourable Augustus Livingstone returned a wounded man from the siege of Seringapatam, and married Mary Denton, in a distant settlement, but with all due observance. He lived only part of a year, being during that time a great sufferer, and utterly incapable of removal; but his life was prolonged, as well as his comfort promoted, by the ceaseless cares of his wife, who, some months after his death, became the mother of a girl. He had taken every means in his power to conceal his marriage from his

friends; and having placed a considerable sum of money at her disposal, exacted from her a promise, that if his offspring was "only a girl," she would forbear to trouble his friends with any information, but herself insure the child a sufficient portion. On the contrary, if she were the mother of a son, it was his pleasure that the proofs and claims of such heir should be immediately established.

"Many waters cannot quench love," says the wise man; but this widow's love had been quenched by the pride no submission could disarm, the coldness and unkindness of a hard heart, rendered more selfish by suffering. The dreams and hopes of youth were all blighted. The energies which had enabled her to bear and to endure, had been impaired by wearisome attendance, and a climate that must enervate where it does not destroy. No wonder that the voice of friendship and affection found in her a willing auditor. She married, and became happily settled at Bombay, which suited her health, and provided her with many friends. From this place she first wrote to her parents, announcing herself as the wife of a wealthy merchant, and allowing the veil of oblivion to rest on the miseries of the past.

As Mr. Vining knew nothing of Captain Livingstone, and received with his widow a portion, of which he honestly set aside two-thirds to accumulate for her daughter, and which he considered as much as so young a man was likely to possess, and no will or memorandum was in his wife's possession, which could lead to discussion, it was easy for her to preserve the promise she had made to the father of her eldest daughter. She had many children to her second husband, but they all died except one boy, whom his father could not bear

to part with, so that neither he nor Augusta reaped the benefit of a European education. The latter was a handsome and amiable child, very like her father in person, and her mother in disposition, making due allowance for the foibles inevitable to an Indian education, as it existed then. She was affectionate but inert; not inclined to despotism, but yet constant in exacting obedience, as the consequence of habitually receiving attention.

Mr. Vining would have preferred ending his life in the country where he had spent all his best days; but when his wife, at the end of twenty years, gave evident proof of inability to live there much longer, he hastily began to arrange his affairs, and determined on departure. She had long been to him as the very light of life, and he could neither bear to subject her to the evils of a protracted stay, nor allow any attendance upon her voyage less anxious than his own. Before his utmost efforts availed, for the purpose of returning, she became so much worse as to render her unequal to setting out at all. When on the eve of her dissolution, she told her husband of the promise she had made Captain Livingstone, of being silent as to her marriage with him, and the birth of her daughter; adding, that her silence now struck her as a species of conduct to her child which might be injurious to her on their return to England.

Mr. Vining held it to be so in a much greater degree than it had struck her; and although he soothed her on the subject, he hastened to collect every circumstance which tended to prove the validity of the marriage, and lost no time in forwarding a petition to Calcutta, requesting the necessary documents to be forwarded to England.

Such were the communications made to Mr. Livingstone, who had reason to expect every day the arrival of the new claimant, in the person of his niece, supported by her step-father, who, as a man of the world, hitherto devoted to mercantile gains, might prove an exacting creditor, not only demanding present possession, but restitution of income, wisely expended and innocently usurped, but nevertheless held illegally, and therefore subject to be demanded.

If his brother's child had not approached as an enemy, it is certain she would have been most cordially received as a friend, by every branch of Mr. Livingstone's family. With them alone was she likely to be acknowledged as a relation, for Lord Beautree was slowly sinking into the grave, which his eldest son's misconduct had prepared for him, and it was understood that Lady Beautree violently protested against the legality of the Indian marriage. Mrs. Livingstone received the shock it first gave her, as a trial to which it was her duty to submit. But she yet held it right that she should not yield blindly, in a case where imposition might certainly be suspected; and determined to spare her daughter from partaking their uneasiness, until she had somewhat prepared her mind to receive it.

This mode of conduct the tender father was the more anxious to pursue, because he had unhappily adopted the idea, that it might be injurious to the health, nay, perhaps the life of his only darling. "Blanche," said he, "is entering life under all its most prosperous and promising circumstances. She has youth, health, and that natural vivacity which renders her advantages peculiarly valuable. If they are suddenly, as well as prematurely blighted, who can answer for the effect either upon her mind or her constitution! Her pity for

us, the mortification her pride, in league with her affection, may receive, the mingled feelings we may condemn, but can hardly blame, the overthrow of her best schemes for others, not less than the entire change in her situation, may have effects I dread to think of. All else I trust I can meet as a man and a Christian. But if I am bereaved of my children, I *am* bereaved."

"Say also, my dear, that if this affliction, severe and almost appalling as it now is, should be sanctified in its operation to our beloved Blanche; if it should lead her to bend to the rod as an obedient child, chastened by her heavenly Father, and sustaining with cheerful acquiescence and sincere humility a trial so great to her earthly parents, our losses may be considered as dust in the balance."



the subsiding of a grief too highly wrought for long duration, still remained silent.

This silence struck Blanche as something unaccountable. "How could you, mother, keep all this trouble from me so many days?"

"We wished to spare you, my dear; at least your father did so. If his desires had not forbidden me, I should have found relief in asking your participation."

"But how *could* you conceal your feelings?"

"We did not conceal our sense of impending trouble, for you discovered it. But by submitting to the affliction, the acuteness of grief felt by *you* never reached *us*. Our great endeavour was to do unto others what we desired they should do to us. We tried to place ourselves in the situation of our opponents, and saw clearly that this Mr. Vining must prosecute the claims of his daughter-in-law; but we trusted that our readiness to admit them, our desire to save him from litigation, and our power to return the estates in a much better condition than we received them, might so operate on his mind, as to induce him to forego a considerable portion of the claim the law may give him."

"How much of your money, your *own* money, would that take, dear mother?"

"Probably *all*, for I received my fortune, as a legacy, after I had been married three years. Your father has expended his own private fortune in improving these estates, for which I doubt not an allowance will be made. We cannot be left to abject poverty. Besides, your father is in the prime of his life, and retains the knowledge necessary for pursuing the profession for which he was intended. Our situation must be changed; but it will not, therefore, be derogatory in rank, or deplorable in circumstances."

"Not deplorable to be condemned to the drudgery of a profession?—to the miserable economy of keeping up appearances, by sacrificing all your habitual comforts, and even your intellectual pleasures? I think it would be better to be utterly stripped, to be turned out into the world as beggars, than compelled to mingle in the same path with our acquaintance, and feel the crushing smile of one man's kindly patronage, the insolent trampling of another's forgetfulness;—I would far rather fly from all!"

"Surely, Blanche, you cannot have been living in society so long, young as you are, without knowing some persons you esteem, and even love? Would not their sympathy be sweet to you in the day of affliction? or why would you deny them the power of helping you? The independence of industry and integrity is one thing, the pride which rejects assistance another. I agree, that it is more difficult to preserve your station in society with narrow means, than drop into one decidedly below you; for the latter includes that personal exertion which prevents us from recurring to the past, in the labours demanded for the present. But we must not choose our own trials. Simple submission is, to many minds, the most difficult task they can be called to encounter; but it must be performed."

"You do not mean to say my father should submit implicitly to people of whom he knows nothing, save that they seek to impoverish a good man, in order to endow a haughty girl, whose wealth would enrich some worthless prodigal?"

"Your father is not called upon to yield his property to the stranger, save on the fullest conviction; having that conviction, he cannot, as an honest man, withhold

it. Of the receiver we know nothing, and can have no right to class her with the proud or the foolish. If you place yourself in her situation, you will see much to pity, Blanche."

"To pity, indeed! Indian princesses demand homage rather than compassion."

"Nevertheless they may be in circumstances demanding it. She has lost a tender mother, the only relation she has ever known. She comes in a hostile form, through the step-father, who must necessarily be her guide, towards the only family on the face of the earth who would receive her as a niece and cousin, granting alike the claims of consanguinity, and the kindness due to her as a young unprotected woman, and one who is a stranger in a strange land. If you place yourself in her situation, I think, as a woman of delicacy, of naturally warm affections, and that integrity which fears to do wrong, you will see much to be pitied."

"To lose her mother was certainly a sad thing—a very sad thing. For *that* I must pity even *her*. But we do not know how far she might feel it; these eastern people lose sensibility, in their indolence, apathy, and pride."

"True; pride destroys much of our feeling for others, but it quickens our own sense of injustice and injury. —'Touch a proud man, and he smarts all over,' has been said with great truth. But we have no right to apply this character to your cousin. We are perfect strangers to her. She claims her birthright through another, who evidently considers it his duty to assist an orphan. However we may suffer, we must distinguish between that which our opponent is justified in demanding, and that which we feel justified in withholding. Why should we condemn persons who are

only doing what we should do in the same circumstances? Let us rather accept the inflictions as coming from God, through the medium of his creatures; not therefore resigning our own rights, or infringing those of others. When David said, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good unto him,' the agony of his heart had passed away, or rather, did pass away in the act of submission."

"You do not think a great sorrow can be cured in a moment, mother? Surely it is fanaticism rather than faith to expect it."

"I think so as well as you, Blanche. It is by sincere prayer, by patient watching, by constant striving, by looking much on the blessings which are spared to us, and remembering how little we deserve them, that we are enabled to gain that fortitude demanded in many trials, that cheerfulness which is a duty towards others, and that happy humility which enables us, in every situation, 'to be therewith content.' Humility not only gives the proof of Christianity being an abiding principle of the heart, but confers the privileges of Christianity, the peace, the charity, the perfect trust and submission of a loving though chastened child."

"Few people, even *good* people, are so humble as they should be."

"I fear *none* are so humble as they *should be;* nevertheless, many are humble, and all are happy in proportion to their humility. It is the task of a whole life to many. It has been so to your mother, Blanche, notwithstanding the lessons of her youth; though the excellent disposition of your father, whether given by nature, or the early discipline he experienced as a neglected child, has called for little self-conquest in this particular."

"My father, my inestimable father, for your sake—

for yours *alone*, I am unable to bear this change!" cried Blanche, again relapsing into tears, but with more of sorrow and less of anger than before.

"Yet your father will feel the change in his circumstances only as it curtails our enjoyments and conveniences, not his own. His affections will sympathize in the wounds *our* pride may inflict upon us; and he must be grieved at those times when his charities are curtailed, his power of rewarding merit or fostering genius checked. Beyond this he will not suffer, provided we are not wanting in our duty to him and our submission to God."

"I will struggle—I will think on all you have said; and by-and-by I hope I shall be able to pray as I ought to do, fervently and *humbly;* but at this moment there is a stubbornness in my sorrow, mother—a questioning why and wherefore this trouble is come upon us, that forbids the action of either faith or hope to my heart for the purposes of consolation."

"Time and meditation will help you; and so will a charitable disposition in your judgment of others. Meantime, though you may feel acutely an inward conflict, for your father's sake appear capable of sustaining whatever may arise. His fears and my own are all for *you*, Blanche; we have now *no other*."

As Mrs. Livingstone arose and retired with a lingering step, the heart of Blanche was penetrated with a new sorrow. Fears for the health as well as the happiness of her parents presented apprehensions that went beyond all others, and which finally led her to consider the situation of her unknown relative with a degree of candour and consideration of which she had been lately incapable. The pleasures, rank, riches, and all that might be termed the gauds of life, faded in her eyes,

when contrasted with the blessing of possessing parents so estimable as hers—so tender, so fond, yet so capable of guiding her mind, and protecting her from the consequence of her own false conclusions.

Blanche met her father with a pale cheek but a cheerful countenance. If an unbidden tear once or twice glistened in her eye, she assured him, with a true and therefore an unfaltering voice, that it was the consequence of thoughts in which Mr. Vining and his claims had no share. In truth she had entered on the duty of self-examination, for the sake of estimating her own powers of meeting the worst that could arise. This necessarily led to repentance for many errors hitherto thought lightly of, and induced a humble and teachable spirit, together with a sense of increased gratitude to God, for having spared so many blessings to one unworthy of even a few.

Many times, in the solitude of her chamber, would tears of contrition steal down the cheeks of Blanche at this period; but those of sorrow for the expected loss of worldly wealth ceased to harass her. She found herself every day better able to talk over the affair with her parents, and, by many a plan for the future, prove that she possessed the energies of enduring with magnanimity the greatest change of circumstances, not less than the acquirements and talents which would enliven solitude, and confer dignity on comparative poverty. Her manners were lively, although a gentle meekness mingled with their vivacity. There was a quiet patience in bearing with the faults of domestics, and the inquisitiveness of unfeeling and impertinent visitants, which greatly relieved her mother, and at once repelled and surprised those who had anticipated her haughty anger and overwhelming grief.

But such interviews were nevertheless severe trials to the acutely-wounded mind of Blanche, who was alike anxious to save her parents from witnessing her pain, and subdue that portion of it which her heart acknowledged to be sinful, as arising from pride and anger. At such moments she would hasten into her flower-garden, or extend her walk to the school her mother had endowed; and whilst her throbbing bosom said, "To whom should I go but unto thee, O Lord, with this new vexation," she sought to lose the memory of offence in the employment offered by benevolence, or that contemplation of the beauties of nature which most effectually soothes the mind, when mingled with the promises of revelation.

Few indeed are the sorrows of life which will not yield to the sense of God's goodness and greatness, impressed on the bosom by walking forth into an open flower-garden, beyond which the eye may range over a wide landscape, whilst immediately around it are seen the glowing beauties of many a distant land, reflecting the soft sunbeam from their dew-gemmed chalices, and offering perfumes that soothe the senses, whilst the breeze that fans them invigorates the languid frame. The eye is drawn to many an opening bud or busy insect, the ear claimed by songs that rise to heaven, and carry our hearts along with them. We are astonished and delighted by the magnificence that surrounds us; and at the same time persuaded, that the glorious Being, in whom all around "live, move, and have their being" (since "not a sparrow falleth to the ground" without his knowledge), careth for *us* also.

The more Blanche thought of her parents, their value to the circle in which they were placed, and their indi-

vidual virtues, the more she shrunk from the idea of seeing them in any sense driven out of society. Her too vivid imagination would frequently depict them under circumstances of want and insult, to which it was little likely even a hard-judging world would subject them, since it was not possible to see error in the past conduct of Mr. Livingstone. At such times Blanche thought she could bear anything—submit to anything, in her own person, and even labour for them by any mental exertion, provided they were altogether removed from their former home and former acquaintance, and dear as some had been to her, she yet desired to resign all—*all.* There is much of this abandonment in times of sorrow in all the young, who are never willing to take good or evil as it is generally distributed, but must make a wholesale wreck of happiness, or accept joy in such an abundant way as Providence never bestows in a durable manner. Experience teaches the matured mind to cling to that even more closely which it once valued, and accept consolation in lieu of felicity. More especially will the resigned Christian hold fast remaining blessings, as the gifts of that heavenly Father, who "chasteneth, but doth not destroy, his children."

In her sweeping clauses it must be confessed, that while Blanche, in imagination, bade farewell to all former friends, hopes, and occupations, and was more desirous that God would change her situation than herself, there was a lingering about her heart respecting the feelings of one person towards her, which proved a barrier to her entire renunciation of that world she had so lately entered with such different prospects.

During a visit she had paid, whilst her heart was still bleeding from the loss of her brother, where there

was a large family and many guests, two gentlemen were, like herself, abiding visitants. They were brothers and orphans. The eldest, Lord Castlemore, a fine young man, had lately fallen into a delicate state of health, and his brother, the Honourable Edmund Lawson, had hastened from Oxford, to watch over him, and, if possible, induce him to seek a warmer climate before the approach of winter. The young nobleman had only returned from the Continent a short time, and having satisfied his curiosity, was indisposed for further travel. He loved his own country, and desired to live in it; and had no apprehension whatever of the occasional and temporary attacks to which he was subject, being of moment.

The young ladies of the family were somewhat on the *qui vive* towards persons of his lordship's description. Nor were their visitants less so, with the exception of Blanche, who was decidedly the youngest of the party, and whose thoughts sobered by the long illness and death of her brother, had not hitherto wandered to marriage as a matter of policy, or been led to think of it by predilection of any kind. Having also of late thought much more of herself than usual, she was the less likely to think of any other person.

In the serious tone of her manners at some times, and the sensibility she evinced in all references to insidious disease and fraternal affection, there appeared a similarity of feeling with Edmund Lawson, which naturally drew them together. Their tastes, abilities, and general pursuits rendered them evidently so well suited to each other, that it could not strike a casual observer as remarkable, that they agreed in almost every opinion, and partook every amusement in the society of each other. How far this coinci-





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dence might have led both parties, it would be difficult to say, if a circumstance had not suddenly brought their apparent predilection to a sudden and painful termination.

The kind attentions of Edmund to his brother naturally caused Lord Castlemore to feel obliged to any person who rendered one so dear to him happy; and when he could disengage himself in any degree from one or other of two young ladies, who were his "easy-besetting" companions, whether for short rides, long duets, walks in the conservatory, or challenges at bagatelle, he evidently sought her company; and in order to divert him, she called forth more of her former vivacity (for she was naturally very lively) than usual. In proportion, however, as Blanche became gay, her companions grew grave. Even her bosom friend, Louisa Hartwell, appeared petulant, offended, and unhappy. After having inspired Blanche with what she termed just ideas of her own importance, it was not likely that she should submit to this kind of treatment in unquestioning silence. In a short time she professed an earnest desire to return home, and inquired of Lady Hartwell—"If Sir Robert could spare the carriage for that purpose?"

It would be a pity that you should leave us just at the time when we are really likely to be useful to you, my dear; besides, Louisa hoped we should detain you at least till the season for shooting commences."

"Louisa's manners convince me that she can spare me now very well; and I—I wish to go. I never left my mother so long before, and I have become sensible that I ought to return."

"But it appears that my daughter has, in some way unknown to me, awakened that sense of duty. Friends,

like lovers, must have quarrels; but I believe both parties make up these matters best without interference. Here comes Louisa; I hope you will come to an explanation."

Addressing a few words to her daughter, in a low voice, Lady Hartwell left the room. Louisa said in a somewhat sarcastic tone, but with a torrent of blushes, "You were the last person, Blanche, I should have suspected of—of—of—doing—doing—"

"Doing what, in the name of wonder?"

"Mischief without end, and then running away and leaving me—me, who loved you so sincerely, to bear the brunt of everything."

As Louisa spoke she burst into a passion of tears, which poor Blanche beheld by no means unmoved either with sorrow or indignation. But as she knew her own innocency on whatever point she could be assailed, she preserved silence, until the tempest in some measure had spent itself, when she said, "I hope you will tell me wherein I have been to blame. I certainly cannot accuse myself of any unkindness, in thought, word, or deed, towards you, Miss Hartwell."

"Did you not encourage poor Edmund Lawson?"

It was now Blanche's turn to blush; and unquestionably her transparent skin showed, in its alternate colours, that much more was passing in her mind than she had hitherto suspected; nevertheless, she recovered her self-possession, and said with dignity, "I really do not understand you. I have never exchanged a word with Mr. Lawson in any way different from the conversation I held with other gentlemen, who are your father's guests."

"Yes, indeed, Blanche, you have, whether you knew

it or not, for you agreed with him in everything; and he is so learned and gentle and sentimental, and even religious, that as you are very rich, and can afford to take a handsome younger son, though many people in the house thought it strange of you, I did *not;* especially as he is exactly the man *your* father and mother might like, though mine would not. So I was glad to see things taking a natural course, as it were. Ellen Grey called it 'proceeding on the levelling system,' and said, 'If an heiress could not play the fool, who could?'"

"I am much obliged to Miss Grey for her opinion. I might have expected *her* censure; but for your similar opinion I was not prepared."

"My opinion was not at all similar. What she called 'throwing yourself away,' I thought was giving yourself generously."

A somewhat haughty movement of the head was the reply; and Louisa continued:

"You could not but see, Blanche (for you were my friend), that Lord Castlemore was, of all the men I ever saw, the one whom I consider the most amiable, the most—in short, he certainly is a man anybody might, I will not say *love,* but anybody would *prefer,* which is as far as any prudent girl can venture. Besides, he was particularly attentive to me, and if Ellen Grey had not compelled him in a manner to leave me from time to time, we should have got on admirably, especially as Edmund was always with you. I am sure I was grateful to you till I saw your design, which indeed I might have known before, only I did not think you so artful."

"I shall be glad to know again what you mean?"

"I mean, that you never had cared in the least for

Edmund, but were merely civil to him, until you had so far captivated him, as to lead his brother to look further into your good qualities, on which you exerted yourself to the utmost to charm him, and for anything I know—oh, Blanche, in order to become the wife of a man of rank, you have, I fear, ruined my hopes for ever! But perhaps I wrong you—perhaps I have done so ever since Sunday; if so, I pray you pardon me—consider my anxiety—my misery!"

"I have in the first place to consider myself, for I have never before been placed in so strange a situation, nor I trust shall be again. I shall send for a carriage from my father's immediately, and you will make my apologies for not dining down stairs. I can with great truth plead a more than common headache."

"But what will they say? what will they think?"

"Just what they please—to me it is immaterial."

"Miss Grey will make a thousand conjectures. She will say your father has sent for you in haste; and that you dare not trust yourself to bid farewell to Edmund."

"I will go down. I will disappoint her malice to-night; but I shall certainly leave her to-morrow, to start again as your rival with Lord Castlemore. Alas, there is another in ambush!"

"You do not think anything of his complaints? My brother says there is not a shadow of danger, and that Edmund only pretends to fear, in order to disguise hopes which are very ill founded. Poor fellow! he has so envied him your smiles, that one must forgive a hasty judgment."

The ladies separated to dress; but so overwhelmed and embarrassed was the mind of Blanche, by the sudden opening of a view of human nature, for which

she was totally unprepared, and that little peep into her own heart, which she had taken perforce, and which was scarcely less surprising, that it was some time before she could ring for her maid, or in any way arrange her mind for the mighty task she undertook, of appearing perfectly at her ease, at a time when contending emotions were harassing her heart.

Notwithstanding every effort, and the arrival of a large dinner-party, which conveniently separated her from her general companions, Blanche was alternately pale and flushed during the whole evening, and the curl of contempt rose more frequently to her lip than the smile of complacency. She was either absent in conversation or flippant, faults which had never been observed in her before, and which therefore drew observation she shrunk from provoking; and the really amiable brothers, who had innocently been the cause of her vexation, could not fail to remark the extraordinary change in her manners.

Whatever hopes of the heiress Edmund might have indulged, were this night not only annihilated, but for the time an impression made of her pride that was positively revolting. Although he could not fail to think something must have occurred to produce such a change, when combined with her unexpected removal on the morrow, he could hardly fail to consider her conduct as intended to make a final parting between them.

On that night Blanche slept little, for she had arranged to take her departure early, and was sensible that she had conducted herself more naturally, than either wisely or kindly, towards persons who had given her no possible offence, and who must be ignorant of the conversation which had so greatly offended her

sense of delicacy, and misconstrued her simplest actions, and most blameless motives. She was not, therefore, sorry to find, in the morning, that she would necessarily have to wait until the horses were refreshed, and of course meet the family at breakfast. But although she was now more like her former self, and felt that common civilities would be allowed, even by her watchful censurer, at parting, there was a constraint in her manners extremely annoying to herself, and painful to others, more especially to one who, although he rather avoided conversation, gazed upon her with inquiring eyes, which at some moments were expressive of tenderness and pity, at others of surprise and condemnation.

The loudly-expressed sorry of Louisa, who was conscious that she had offended one she yet sincerely loved, somewhat relieved the awkwardness of her situation. But happy was she, when, after being handed into the carriage by Sir Robert Hartwell, to the evident annoyance of his son, she returned to that dear home, which she determined not to quit hastily again, in search of gayer society. She had, in one little month, or rather in one day, gained views of human nature, that had distressed, offended, almost appalled her. She saw clearly that the doctrine she had been always taught, but never till now held to be practically true, of an original sin in our nature, was the cause of her disquiet, and said repeatedly to herself, "The heart is deceitful above all things—who can know it?"

Of course, this deceit she held to be the sin of Ellen Grey and Louisa Hartwell, who had misconceived her motives, and cruelly falsified her conduct; but by degrees, the belief that Louisa had mistaken her, in consequence of jealousy, softened the sense of her misconduct. Something in her own bosom said, "That a

woman might love a man too much for her peace, even if he had not given her a right to fix her affections by the surrender of his own;" in which case she might have more fears of the interference of another than if he had. When this emotion of pity for Louisa was awakened, something like a blush for herself quickly followed. Thence arose a resolution to banish from her mind all memory of one "who had in fact no right to think of *her*;" and she determined to call her pride to her aid, as the best auxiliary to banish love, if indeed her predilection merited the name.

It was therefore in this frame of mind that she had evinced so much of this hateful passion as to alarm her parents, who in her apparent caprice at some times, and *hauteur* at others, saw only that a baneful weed had been implanted in a generous soil, capable of bearing alike the thistle and the flower. Perhaps from their ignorance of the inward struggle their daughter experienced, and the increased distance of her manners towards all their younger male visitants, they overrated the degree of poor Blanche's self-esteem, and therefore became more painfully sensible of its apparent influence than the case demanded. But for *her*, the circumstance was happy. By engaging her mind in some degree with important subjects of consideration, which taxed her energies and excited her powers, her mother weaned her unconsciously from recollections, which might in solitude have proved injurious. Many a young imaginative woman has nursed a slight preference into a positive attachment, by giving up her whole mind to its tender reminiscences, and the supposed worthiness of its object.

Blanche gave her pride, in this apparent self-conquest, more credit than it merited in the first instance; but

when the threatened affliction taught her the duty of self-examination, and the fear of losing all earthly treasure induced her to look beyond it for comfort, she became sensible that the cares of her mother had contributed to this end, and that in some way her heart's inmost secret had been read, and that which she deemed its weakness cared for. Happy is that daughter who can hold her bosom open to a mother's eye, for who will scan its delicate infirmities so tenderly? who temper the sensibilities which wound, with the prudence which strengthens the heart, with equal kindness? It may be very difficult to make a confidante of an ambitious mother, but it is not so of a reasonable and religious mother; for she will remember what her own feelings were in days past, and have due consideration for the wanderings of the heart, even when she deems it her duty to repress them.

But did Blanche never turn for a little comfort to the image of Edmund in her breast, as one especially calculated to console, for the loss of fortune and importance, the woman to whom he devoted a heart so kind as his? Did she never feel the happiness of equality with him as a younger son, whose views could no longer be mistaken, should any circumstance again bring them together? Undoubtedly she did; but short-lived was the pleasure this afforded, since it was inevitably blended with a belief that her manners must have appeared captious and unaccountable, to a man whose turn of mind was directly opposed to the insolence of pride, however modified, and whose fraternal anxiety, though unobtrusive, had impressed upon his countenance, and tinged his conversation with a gentle melancholy, interesting to every one capable of estimating what was excellent in character and admirable in feeling. Often

therefore as her mind might return to the remembrance, seldom could it gain comfort from the visit; and the new trouble by degrees banished those images and recollections which had formerly engrossed her so entirely.



IV.

The Fair Cousins.

IT will be evident to every one, that it was a duty which Mr. Livingstone owed to himself and family, to obtain the best possible advice upon his case, and so arrange his affairs as to hold himself ready for the sacrifice demanded by circumstances, without depriving himself of those advantages he believed to be accorded by justice. In a short time therefore after the conversations above related, the whole family removed to town, although neither parliamentary duties nor the pleasures of the season were before them, and the country had still many attractions in its more sober enjoyments.

But London has always certain objects of novelty and amusement, which may not only increase innocent pleasures, but add to useful knowledge; and Mrs. Livingstone was desirous that her daughter should partake them. She by no means wished to see her sink from a proud, gay girl, to a cold, austere ascetic, nourishing, perhaps, in the core of her heart, the very sin she most affected to renounce. She knew that the young require society as a mental appetite, and must have a right to that enjoyment which the Creator him-

self has implanted in the breast of all his creatures in the morning of life, and which they are enabled to impart to all around them, whose natures are kindly and whose tastes are pure. Not unfrequently would she allude to those glorious lines in which Hannah More* has bequeathed a legacy to mankind, not unlikely to outlive even her most valued works, and repeat the lines of an old song, as giving not less good advice to a daughter than a wife—

> "Be gay and good-humoured, obliging and kind,
> Turn the cares of your heart from your face to your mind;"

and as often would Blanche try to chase from her brow the new vexation or the old trouble, which her father's situation exposed her to feel.

Our sweetest pleasures are frequently our cheapest, and Blanche was becoming not only sensible that humility was a duty she owed to God, but a quality which sweetened the most adverse circumstance of life, and awakened gratitude for its most moderate enjoyments. With that happy facility peculiar to youth, she believed herself capable of descending, not only with

* "Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
Since few can save, or serve, but all can please,
Oh! let the ungentle spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
Large bounties to bestow, we wish in vain,
But all may shun the guilt of giving pain.
The gentle offices of patient love,
Beyond all flattery, and all price above;
The mild forbearance of another's fault,
The taunting word suppressed as soon as thought;
On these Heaven bade the sweets of life depend,
And crushed ill fortune, when it made a friend.
Small slights, contempt, neglect, unmixed with hate,
Make up in number what they want in weight;
These, and a thousand griefs minute as these,
Corrode our comforts and destroy our peace."

dignity but perfect ease, as low as Providence might call her. But grievously was her philosophy disturbed, though founded on the highest and purest principles of action, when town began to fill, and a necessarily numerous acquaintance poured upon her father, in a manner infinitely worse to endure than anything they had met with among their country neighbours.

It would be wrong to speak of the *indifferent* who cared not a single straw whether his hospitable host would be next day lodged in a prison, the *curious*, who made a wound whilst he asked a question, the *condoling*, who lacerated in pretending to soothe, the *wise*, who poured advice in order to prove knowledge, the *giddy*, who rushed into the subject without either delicacy or motive, without adding, that many who had long known and esteemed Mr. Livingstone, really acted the part of true friends at this juncture. They constantly repelled the falsehoods abundantly propagated against him, by which he was charged with having spirited away the heiress, and keeping her in durance until now, when she had been discovered and released, by some lover, under circumstances that were more miraculous than the days of chivalry have recorded. They answered newspaper innuendoes, mystifying his character, and hinting at the deeds of wicked uncles, from the time of Richard the Third downwards, including the tragic story of the Babes in the Wood. In not a few instances were they called on to repel that most cruel of all assertions made by these censurers, who take the liberty of pressing their Creator's name into strange services—"That really Mr. Livingstone must have lost his son as a judgment upon him, for so wickedly robbing his own brother's child."

Many of the stories so readily invented and freely

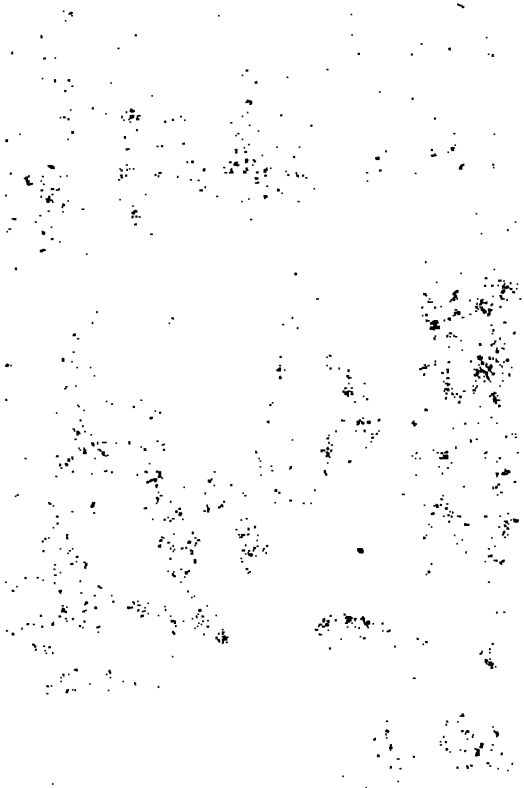
circulated, unquestionably never reached his ear, or raised the indignant blush upon his daughter's cheek. But enough met his eye in the daily journals, to prove that he, the most retiring of men by habit, and perhaps nature (seeing how his early aspirations were crushed), was under the *surveillance*, and, with few exceptions, the condemnation of all—his integrity disputed, his philanthropy questioned, his intentions misconstrued, his sincere, but unobtrusive piety ridiculed, and his early history ransacked, for materials on which to hang a tissue of falsehoods. No wonder that his health and his fortitude gave way, that he became impatient to meet his trial, and thought the ship never would arrive which brought opponents whose malice could not exceed that by which he was surrounded.

In point of fact, there is no misfortune under heaven so heart-sinking and spirit-galling as disgrace. Loss of bread may be borne, for industry or charity can supply it; but loss of character, more especially when "our good is evil spoken of," when our desire to bless our fellow-creatures is turned into a curse to ourselves, and not only our innocent and harmless actions, but our actually generous and self-denying ones, are suspected of deceit, and decried as the offspring of cunning and hypocrisy—oh! this we cannot endure. Well might Job find his friends the severest part of his torments, for they sought to deprive him of the single consolation and the most efficacious support misfortune had allowed him.

Blanche saw with deep distress that the "iron had entered the very soul" of her father; and that her mother, whose well-regulated mind had long sustained them all, found in his declining health and energies, that peculiar suffering which she could not endure, that

difficulty she could not stem. Reproaches so unmerited falling on one who was so justly beloved, and so perfectly blameless, would rouse whatever of anger and indignation existed in her nature. The utter impossibility of repelling attack, and explaining circumstances, kept even the most subdued spirits in a state of perpetual excitation. She became pale and attenuated, thoughtful and silent, evidently communed much with her own heart, but had rarely the power of speaking, lest she should utter thoughts it was her duty to suppress, and give way to the bursting agony swelling at her burdened heart.

What now was the world, or the things thereof, to poor Blanche, save as they could help, or restore, the peace of her beloved parents! How earnestly did she pray for them, and how necessary was it to pray for herself also, for terrible was the tempest raised from day to day in her bosom. Anger at these unfounded accusations, an earnest desire of revenge on those who wrote, or repeated them, bitter, burning contempt on those she termed fools for believing them, and grief, love, pity, for her father, each amounting to agony, would arise in her bosom, and contend for the mastery. But she now knew that submission was safety and peace; and earnestly did she seek to subdue them, in order that she might not only evince the spirit of a chastened child towards her Heavenly Father, but by the cheerful activity of love, sustain her earthly parents. By letters received at this time, they learned that the family they now rather desired than dreaded to see, were detained at Madeira, in consequence of the illness of its head, who was not expected to recover when the vessel sailed which brought the information. Should he die, many persons thought the claim of the orphan



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would fall to the ground. Against such an idea Mr. Livingstone was the first to protest. If her birth could be satisfactorily established, she was undoubtedly the heir, although it was evident that her father had not desired her to be so considered, and had burdened his estates to portion her. As he had never seen her, never felt as a father the "little strong embrace," which awakens the most holy and delightful emotions of the heart, and had evidently a desire to conceal his marriage, this was accounted for. But to so conscientious a man as Mr. Livingstone, her misfortunes in respect to both parents strengthened her claims, and this conviction he frequently expressed to his father, who feebly acquiesced in his opinion. His mother, on the contrary, insisted that the posthumous child was altogether a suspicious affair, which ought to be resisted by every medium which the law's delay could furnish; and she spoke of the poor girl, and the "low-born father-in-law," with a virulence of pride and ill humour, utterly unjustifiable on any grounds.

By degrees, the family became less agitated from external causes, for the mysterious claimant and claim were succeeded by a newer wonder. As summer was now advancing, they earnestly desired to return to their country mansion, being prepared to lay all circumstances and accounts before those who might be empowered to examine them, and anxious to obtain repose for their own long-harassed minds. This design was frustrated by a circumstance more awful in its own nature than anything they could have apprehended, though less personally afflictive than the relation of the parties warranted.

Mr. Delaval, long banished his country in consequence of his debts, had at length returned, procured a

seat in Parliament, sought out for a wife whose fortune might atone for any personal failings, and was now on the high road to what was considered a prosperous conclusion of a bad career. As, however, he had many connections with foreigners, who still sought to make him their prey at the gaming-table, his expected union rendered some of them very constantly about him on the watch to inveigle him at the proper moment. The opportunity was found by a Polish nobleman; but contrary to all precedent, Delaval was winner to a considerable amount. The Pole, desperate with losses he was unequal to meet, in the irritation of the moment uttered reproaches the Englishman could not bear; they fought, and Delaval received a wound, which in two days proved fatal.

Lord Beautree had long been a proof that the "broken heart pines on for years," since it is certain that this son's misconduct had rendered him, even in the prime of his days, a withered old man. This stroke added the horrors of a paralytic attack to the debility under which he had long laboured, and he became helpless as a child.

Blanche knew little of her uncle; but she had always loved her grandfather, and his affliction excited her tenderest sympathy at the present season. Since she appeared to understand his imperfect speech much better than any other person near him, at the earnest request of Lady Beautree she consented to remain with them after her parents had returned to Heathfield Hall.

Gloomy indeed was her present situation, and great the sacrifice she made, for relatives who freely demanded the attentions they had never paid. Indeed, Lady Beautree considered it a positive indulgence to her

mother's daughter to be permitted to dwell under the same roof with her noble relatives. If Blanche had previously thought pride sinful, and struggled on that ground to subdue it, she was not the less convinced now that it was ridiculous, and a propensity common sense must teach her to avoid and despise. How many childish displays and gaudy parades were played off by a woman sinking into those years which are always the "valley of the shadow of death," and who in vain rouged the wrinkled cheek, and drew up the emaciated frame to appear the beauty of days past, whilst she descanted on the honours of that husband, in whom humanity was now represented in a form so awfully depreciated! Most happily Blanche found in her visitants many of still higher rank, with far different views and conduct, many who sought to soothe the afflictions of a bereaved mother and anxious wife, through the purest sources of consolation, and who added to external graces "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." She proved the truth of her mother's assertion, that although circumstances might favour the growth of pride, its birth had little to do with them.

One morning, before her grandmother was stirring, Blanche was called to receive Louisa Hartwell. It was pleasant to see one she had once loved most warmly, and she received her with an air of undiminished regard, before any recollection of their parting recurred to her mind. The circumstance seemed affecting to Louisa, for she kissed her with tears in her eyes, which Blanche imputed to sorrow for her supposed, or rather her expected misfortunes.

"I only heard yesterday of his death; and though all hopes had been long over, I cannot help feeling it, dear Blanche."

"I was not aware that you knew Mr. Delaval."

"Nor did I; I was thinking of—of—shall I say my own loss? Poor Lord Castlemore is gone!"

"You surprise me! I never even heard of his illness, except so far as his brother expressed fears for him, which you thought had little foundation."

"Yes, but he was right, it seems; for although he went with him from place to place, it was of no avail. The poor creature died at Madeira, and yesterday the intelligence reached town; but whether Edmund brought it, I know not. Indeed, I know nothing of *him* any way."

"Nothing of *him!*" echoed Blanche, with a sigh.

"Yes; I forget that everything is news to you, for I have never seen you since you left us; and such strange reports have been circulated about you—I mean about your papa, as never were heard, so that we thought it better not to call; but finding you were here, and that come what will Mr. Livingstone must, in due time, be Lord Beautree, my mamma thought it right for me to call. She knew I could open my heart to you freely. But as I said before, I have long ceased to think of Lord Castlemore as ever likely to marry me, or anybody else."

"Did he leave you during the shooting season?"

"He left us the day but one after you left us; for Edmund became so *distrait*, so fidgety and unpleasant, from the very hour you went, as never was known; he almost quarrelled with my brother, for merely saying you were odd, or something of that kind. In short, it was he, I am quite sure, who took poor Castlemore away; and I never saw him since, except once, just before he left England, and it was then too plain that I should see him no more. I do think there never was so good a brother as Mr. Edmund Lawson, that I will

say; but, undoubtedly, he was no more my friend than the friend of Ellen Grey on that occasion; and surely, Blanche, there was a great difference between us."

"There was indeed, Louisa; for one was all art, and the other all nature. But I have seen more of the world since then, and know that many young women in her situation might have done the same; she only gave me credit for resembling herself. I now forgive her sincerely."

"But is there no truth in your estates being lost, and your mother breaking her heart about leaving Heathfield?"

"Abundance of truth about the first part of the question, but none about the last. My mother is harassed and poorly, but she is too good a Christian, Louisa, to break her heart for the loss of even a very dear and pleasant possession."

"So you may think, my dear; but depend upon it, more people, and *good* people too, sink under losses of that kind, than any other sort of trouble. I can't tell why; but I have heard persons of great experience say so, and produce instances of it; and, indeed, being poor must be monstrous disagreeable. I know how to pity them, for I am always poor myself twice a-year; and my mother won't relieve me, because she says, by feeling inconvenience I shall learn to conquer my disposition to extravagance. But I must not stay here chattering, only I am so glad to see you look so well, dear Blanche; for you do look very well, considering that mourning makes every person look so thin."

But most gladly would Blanche have detained Louisa, could she have mentioned the want which had sprung up in her heart, to hear her again speak of Edmund. Several times she was on the point of recurring to the

past, by any medium which would induce her loquacious friend to name, and perhaps to praise him. But the very consciousness of her desire paralyzed her powers, and the entrance of Lady Beautree put a complete extinguisher on that or any other subject; for the daughter of a country baronet, however worthy or important in his circle, was not a person to whom she could condescend to make herself agreeable.

When Blanche, according to custom, took her station by the invalid, whilst his lady had her accustomed drive, she tried to subdue a certain gentle exhilaration which played about her heart soothingly—so soothingly, indeed, that it was almost a pity to repress it; for did not that harassed, and frequently-crushed bosom, require all the comfort gentle recollections and kindly wishes could bestow? Besides, she had surely a right to sympathize with one who was himself a mourner—one too so similarly situated to her own beloved father, that who could say, in after life, he might not be subject to the same severe trials and cruel detractions, and might require, as her father now did, that ameliorating attention and tenderness, which, in all seasons of suffering, whether mental or physical, is most efficacious when administered by a female friend, whatever be the name she bears? One thing was evident; the only man for whom her heart had ever felt even a momentary preference, although he had been the man her erring bosom fled from, and, in its vanity, repulsed, had yet so far compassionated her very folly, as to have become her defender. He, all-discriminating and truly virtuous as she thought him, had seen something in her beyond the surface, which he could esteem; or, what was infinitely more to be desired, he had, as a fellow-Christian, conscious of infirmity, and imbued with that

true charity which "suffereth long, and is kind," been drawn towards her by motives of congeniality in principles, and pity for the faults situation might have implanted and fostered.

Whilst thus inwardly ruminating, and in truth enjoying the new train of thought the visit of Louisa had introduced, the daily papers were brought in for her to read aloud to the invalid. It is a melancholy task to read to one who does not understand a word you say, but yet, from habit, requires that certain sounds shall fall upon his ear, and certain observances be made of his habits and wishes. From her mechanical compliance with Lord Beautree's wants for several weeks, Blanche had got into the habit of losing the sense of what she read, and merely uttering words rather than imbibing ideas; for newspapers had been rendered for some time so hateful to her, that the very sight of them was painful. Nevertheless, she paused on arriving at the following paragraph, and read it a second time deliberately over.

"We understand that Francis Vining, Esq., his son, and Miss Livingstone, his step-daughter, with several oriental attendants, arrived last night at Mivart's Hotel, which will probably be their residence for some time, as the young lady is said to be extremely indisposed, in consequence of her anxiety and exertions during the illness experienced by Mr. Vining at Madeira. The gentlemen of the long robe will now have an opportunity of investigating the claims of the rival heiresses, the Roxalana and Statira of the Chancery Court. 'Since every lady would be queen for life,' no doubt there is no small 'note of preparation' busy in the hearts of these fair warriors in the legal field, both of whom are said to be very handsome."

The latter observations, if read, were unattended to by Blanche, from whose hands the paper fell, when the truth flashed upon her eyes, for quickly did her bosom beat and her colour recede; and although "Go on, child, go on," was uttered near her, she heard it not. The moment often desired, though dreaded, had arrived; and she felt the magnitude, the awe of its importance to her parents, and grieved that it would come to them when she was at a distance, and unable to soften the shock; for a shock her own feelings told her it would be.

By degrees she became capable of doing that which her excellent mother had so earnestly recommended, by endeavouring to place herself in the situation of her cousin. She could not fail to see immediately how forlorn that situation must be, since, however much she might hereafter be admired, beloved, flattered, and followed, she must necessarily be now a stranger, under the sufferings of an invalid, and therefore feeling acutely the disadvantages she laboured under. "And when all is said, she is my own cousin. Neither of us have brother or sister, and we ought to supply these tender ties to each other. Augusta may have nothing to do with the prosecution of my father. She is not yet of age; and since it is evident her mother, for many years, kept from her a most important secret, what can be more probable, than that her father-in-law is practising a similar system at the present moment? I should like to see her, to render her the comfort of feeling she has a friend and relative near her, and interested for her. I will go to her. I am certain my mother would approve of my intention. I cannot think it would displease my dear father.

The young are rapid in their conclusions, but it was certain Blanche was not wrong in the last. But she

was equally certain that Lady Beautree would not consent to her wishes. Therefore her visit, if carried into effect, must be a clandestine affair, from which the natural openness of her character, and her sense of propriety, equally shrank. As, however, the value of her visit to her relation depended upon its earliness, and circumstances favoured her, as the Hartwells were in Brook Street, she determined not to await her grandmother's return, but walk thither, attended by the groom, who usually followed her during her airings in the Park.

When Blanche actually found herself in the house, she felt surprised at her own temerity. As she was kept waiting a very unconscionable time, it is certain that she repented of an act which now struck her as perhaps liable to misconstruction, and subjecting her to offence, from proud, ill-bred, and ill-judging persons. Something like haughty reprisal was rising upon her mind, when an elderly gentleman entered the ante-room, and announced himself as Mr. Vining, adding—"That little as he had expected the honour of a call, for indeed he could not suppose any of the family were in London so late in the season, he would instantly have conducted her to his ward, but the poor girl was scarcely equal to receiving more relations than one at a time."

"I did not know my cousin—I really had no idea that Miss Livingstone could receive any relations but myself. My uncle Delaval died a few weeks ago—Lord Beautree keeps his room, and—and Lady Beautree—is now—perhaps—is she here, sir?"

The hesitation and rising colour of Blanche confirmed Mr. Vining's belief in reports already communicated of her ladyship's opposition to his wishes. He therefore answered with a smile—"Indeed she is *not;* but my

Augusta has another grandmother, of whose existence you have perhaps never heard, Mrs. Denton, who has already visited us, and is now with her."

"She will be more useful than I can be," said Blanche, who was about to depart, when a woman of colour, arrayed in the costume of her country, entered, and addressed a few words to Mr. Vining, who then said—"I believe Augusta desires to see you; and I the rather wish she may do so, whilst the opportunity is given, since I fear, I may be wrong, but I *do fear* your visits may be forbidden."

"Not by my parents, sir, but—"

Whilst yet speaking, she was ushered into the room nearest them, where, on a sofa, arrayed in a morning wrapper, surmounted by a costly shawl, was laid one of the loveliest young women she had ever beheld, with lineaments strikingly like those of her own father, or rather herself—the same deep blue eyes, long lashes, and brows darker than the brown hair, which, although bound round the forehead, showed its luxuriance—the same finely-chiselled features and blond complexion, but with less of the carnation tint, for an air both of *ennui* and ill health pervaded the countenance of the stranger.

Blanche might have been supposed the more self-possessed, though she was the younger of the two, but she did not appear so. In fact, the memory of her brother at this moment broke full upon her bosom, together with a springing love towards the fair creature before her, that put all recollections of past sorrow and anger to flight. Tears sprang to her eyes; and seizing the hand languidly extended to her, she endeavoured to hide her emotion, by stooping and kissing the cheek of Augusta, who murmured in a soft voice, rather to her

father than her visitant—"I am sure this is very kind —very kind indeed. I am so glad to see you; but I mustn't talk."

"No, indeed you must not, my dear; becase for vy? it vouldn't at all be good for ye."

Blanche started, for, absorbed by her own feelings, and the novelty of her situation, for it appeared to herself almost miraculous that she should be in the presence of two persons whose very names had appalled her, without feeling a single emotion of either fear or dislike, she had not observed a well-looking but very slender person, who was half shrouded by the window-curtain. As if sensible that such obscurity was unworthy of her appearance, Mrs. Denton shook out her feathers, and hitched her chair forward, thereby displaying a handsome gown, with sleeves of the largest dimensions, a lace tippet, and white satin bonnet with flowers, all of which were so spick and span new, no doubt could remain of their being bought for the occasion; a circumstance that could not be matter of wonder, for certainly to meet this representative of a daughter, lost so long, and never to be seen again, under the expectation of seeing her become the mistress of countless thousands, and ranking with a grade so superior to her own, might well be considered one of the most important periods of her existence.

There was a little stirring of the old leaven in poor Blanche's bosom, a recollection that in her whole life she never had sat in company before with a *lady* that said "vy and verefore;" but a single glance towards Augusta sent it thence, and recalled all her first wishes, to become the warm friend, the loving relative of one so delicate, and, as she believed, most amiable, since it was evident there existed between her and Mr. Vining

so sincere an attachment, as to prove an excellent disposition in both. He now spoke of their voyage, and long confinement at Madeira, but eulogized that beautiful island warmly, and said—"It had been the means of introducing them to more than one valuable acquaintance."

Mrs. Denton, in a low voice, inquired—"If he had found out who they were?" But her looks being more inquisitive than her words, and apparently not of a kind calculated to please Mr. Vining, he dryly answered—"That he knew them certainly, though he pretended to no talent in the art of finding out."

"Vell, that is surprising, I must say, seeing you come such a great vays off. Now I never travelled no vere, and yet as how my son says I knows everything about everybody: yes, they must rise betimes vat 'scapes my perpetration."

A blush mantled over the fair face of the invalid, followed by a look, that seemed to plead for mercy to Blanche, who replied to it by one full of kindness, for it affected carelessness; and with warmly-expressed good wishes, and a little of that sage advice which even youth and inexperience is privileged to give the ailing, she pressed the hand which had laid hold of hers, and bade adieu.

Mr. Vining accompanied her to her servant, saying, he knew not how to press her return, situated as they all were, yet for Augusta's sake he earnestly desired it; and added earnestly—"Having seen you together, I cannot have any possible doubt of the nearness of your relationship. I trust your father will see her also, and convince himself."

"My father could not doubt, after the documents he received. He has never pretended to doubt; he is the

last man in the world to do it, for being utterly incapable of fraud, he cannot suspect it."

"Then he allows Augusta's claims?"

"But my father has claims of his own, that is claims of *justice*."

"Of course, of course. This is no place to discuss such matters. Honest people rarely disagree; but neither you nor I, Miss Livingstone, must commit ourselves, especially *you*."

Blanche returned, under the full persuasion that Mr. Vining was an upright man, and a good father to Augusta. She was sorry he was so aged, and looked so ill, and could not help thinking that they had all been much more harassed than the occasion warranted, great as it was. Towards Mrs. Denton she felt a degree of painful disgust, for which she blamed herself exceedingly. "Alas!" said she, "how inefficient have been my own lessons of humility, even with those bestowed from the highest source, and brought home to my heart as the chastisement of Providence! Why should I feel this wicked repugnance to a woman who acts and speaks consistently with the sphere of life in which she was born, and in which, at least in one point, she acted wisely and virtuously! She was a good mother—is a good woman, so far as I know. If she did look at me maliciously, is there not a cause? She held me as the enemy of her grandchild, and ought I not to forgive her for an injustice so very natural?"

On meeting Lady Beautree she had much to hear, and was therefore not called upon for any account of her own time. The arrival at Mivart's had proved a fruitful source of conversation with very particular friends, and of animadversion amongst those who were not friends. But one little source of consolation had

spread over her perturbed spirits, like oil on the troubled waters. She was assured that the girl at Mivart's was exceedingly like herself, and positively handsome.

"So she is," rose to the lips of Blanche; but before it was uttered, a tirade against the wretches who had inveigled her poor son, "her *own dear* Augustus, into some kind of a mock-marriage with his tailor's daughter," was uttered with all the vehemence of passion. Often as this painful subject had come upon the *tapis*, Lady Beautree had never before allowed that any marriage had taken place, nor referred to the situation of her daughter-in-law by any specific terms, those of "low-born wretch, presumptuous hussey," &c., answering every purpose.

Painful as it was to witness these ebullitions of useless rage, and frequently as it exposed the vender of vile epithets to involuntary contempt, yet on the present occasion Blanche felt for her grandmother the sincerest pity, and a sense of the bitter mortification, and hourly troubles, which improper connections might entail on many besides the parties who had contracted them. People, she thought, might be very worthy, and possess each many good qualities; but if there was no community of ideas, no habits in common with each other, no mutual modes of life and similarity of opinion, they could not live together in that confidence, nor enjoy that ease necessary for the happiness of any united family, much more of a married pair. "What would become of me," cried she, "if my mother were like vulgar Mrs. Denton? yet she has been very pretty, and her voice is pleasant, though her phraseology is so *outré*."

But, shocking as a marriage of this description

appeared at the present review, Blanche could not conceive how she could have been so blinded by the false judgment of others, so dazzled by the acquisitions which wealth displays, or the honours which rank exacts, as to suppose that a young man of similar birth, education, and connection with herself, was unsuitable, merely because he had less money. "Perish the thought!" was now the language of her heart. But who would now believe her? He had risen, and she had sunk, in the general estimation of mankind. Should they ever meet again, and should he look again upon her as he once did, could she submit to owe that to his pity which she had tacitly refused to his love? or could she bear him to believe that she could give that to his rank which she had refused to his merit? No, that was impossible! never should the motives which governed her, in a point so momentous, be suspected! But ought she not, even on this point, to be humble, and content to receive distinction from one whom she had subjected to caprice, to prove, even through whole years of patient waiting, her claims to his esteem, and her renunciation of past errors?

Poor Blanche might have spared her cogitations; but, for the present, we will leave her to them, in order to visit the dressing-room of the heiress.



V.

One Lord and Two Ladies.

WHEN Mr. Vining returned from placing Blanche under proper escort, Mrs. Denton, to whom he sincerely desired to pay the same attention, exclaimed—"Vell, sir, vhat does you think of this here visit, that Miss Blanche Livingstone, if so be she is *Livingstone*, have paid my granddaughter?"

"I really do not know what to think of it."

"I think nothing could be more amiable than her conduct, and nothing on earth sweeter than herself," said Augusta.

"Vell, to see the difference of all we! For my own part, it strikes me as downright cruelty and imperance."

"I cannot understand how you come to that conclusion," said Mr. Vining.

"Vy, didn't she confess that she saw your arrival in the newspaper? and to my knowledge it was said there, that the young lady, meaning of course my granddaughter, was very poorly; therefore, vhat should she come for, but to see if it was true? 'case, if the dear child should die under age, we all knows as how this Miss would be her heir. I calls it cruelty to come and look at her with sich a wieu; and, indeed, I calls it imperance to

come at *all!* Who wanted she? ben't I the person most properest to see after my own flesh and blood?"

Mr. Vining fell into a meditative position, and kept silence. After a considerable pause, in which Mrs. Denton probably considered her own judgment rash, she added, in a flattering tone, "Besides, she might very naturally be desirous to depreciate your wengeance."

"My vengeance! God forbid I should for a moment entertain any feeling of rancour towards a man who has never offended me, or intentionally wronged any one belonging to me! If I seek to render justice to Augusta as an orphan, I do not therefore wish to distress the innocent usurper of her rights, beyond what the necessity of the case demands. Unquestionably, it is a very hard one."

"Very true; but everybody must consider their own case first. My granddaughter ought to stand in her father's shoes, that's poz!"

"It is not less certain that he did not desire she should."

"That's only because he was always one of your good-for-nothing men of fashion, who thought of nothing in this world but their own pride, and glory, and pleasure. If it hadn't a bin for my vatching of Mary Denton, as a cat vatches a mouse, vy, he'd a bin the ruin of her, though, as you knoes, a better girl for real goodness, as it were, couldn't be found nowhere."

Mr. Vining answered only by an assenting sigh; but after a while observed, that he believed Major Livingstone had been a proud, selfish man, adding, "Has his remaining brother the same character?"

"Quite the contrariety of it. They say there never was a better husband, or master, or landlord; and as to his estates, vy, they're perfect gardens. He took his

vife's fortune, they say, to pay off the mortgages, and so got all into order some years back: so much the better for she, poor dear; for he have lived, what with charities and Parliament business, pretty well up to it; so that when you sweeps him up, his vife's fortune and all will go into the net—so people tells me."

Mr. Vining gave a deep groan; and the narrator, whom we cannot exactly call "the lady," continued,—

"Ay! it's been no little inquiries ve has made about this here affair, ever since we hard the rights of it, as to my poor dear Mary actually marrying the Honourable Mr. Livingstone, and all that; and if my son hadn't been the cleverest man perhaps in all England (to say nothing of being the most larnedest), and acquainted with every editar in London, or thereabouts, he never could have done what has been done in that dear creature's favour."

"Is your son a lawyer?"

"No, sir, my son is vhat they call a 'gentleman of the press;' and in this part of the vorld the press does everything, though it mayn't be so with you in the orizontal regions.'

"The press does not do *every*thing, certainly, with us; nor can I see what could be done in this business, save to prejudge and—"

"Prejudge! that's the very thing, sir; my son has made all the people do that. I know for certain, that what was said in the papers cut old Livingstone to the heart, and made his wife look as white as my granddaughter's Ingee muslin; and as for this here Miss, who has just left us, vy, many's the salt tears she have shed in her own booder. I knows all about 'em, as quiet as they may keep themselves. Walls have ears, and servants have eyes, and for that matter—"

"But what could he say?" interrupted Mr. Vining.

"Vy, sir, I don't much understand littery matters; but I believe my son vent rigularly to vork. First, he mentioned in some papers about a great mystery, and a romantic story, relating to a lovely young woman having married the sign of a noble house; vhen that had gone round, he put in parrygraffs about the vicked uncle that usurped the rights of his orphan niece: everybody must feel for an orphan!"

"They ought to do so," said Mr. Vining, a little relaxing from the cold rigidity hitherto apparent in his manners.

"Vell, sir, when he found that took, he tried to find out any little matter wrong as to Livingstone's character, such as tyrannical ways with his servants, or tenants, or towards poachers, who are mighty convenient people for writing about; but it wouldn't do, for he has always been quite a merciful man, and a morality man it seems, which is something very odd for a lord's son. My son hates all lords; nevertheless, he says now he has got a finity with them through his niece, whom he will take care shall be made a countess in her own right, he shall let them exist as a body through another generation."

"How merciful!"

"So it vas, sir: but he is quite a talented person, and so droll. Only last night, one of his companions said, says he, 'Vy, Ned, you vinds about like a snake.' 'Ay,' says he, 'and you'll soon see I'm a *crested* snake;' meaning, you see, sir, that his niece had arrived, who, for sure, must be grateful to him, for he has gone all lengths for her."

"All lengths indeed!"

"Oh, yes; 'tis unknown the trouble it takes; for, you see, all the editors, or at least most of 'em, are experience men, and can't be taken in to print humbug, as

one may say; and what appears very odd, a good many of 'em are quite full of conscience about things, and vont put in a vord of a lie, if they knows it, and are as stiff as buckram about ever such a trifle: so that a man must go in and out, and round about, before any little matter in the willifying way can get done. To be sure, you see, sir, daily papers must be filled, and they borrows from one another, so that if you can manage to get a thing into one, there is a great chance it will run like wildfire through the rest; and it answers wery vell to put in things to contradict them, and so keep up the ball, as one may say."

A deep sigh from the sofa, indicating weariness, and uneasiness also, arrested the voluble speaker, who stopped, as if pausing to hear observations, or reply. All was silent, until Mr. Vining, as if speaking to himself, exclaimed, "What an awful, nay, *terrible*, instrument is the press!"

"Indeed it is, Mr. Wining, especially ven it is vorked by steam. My son will have the pleasure of waiting upon you, and showing you all about it."

"Not for the world," said Mr. Vining, shrinking as he would from a cobra capello, "not for the world!"

"Not see my son, Mr. Edgar Daniel Denton—not see the man to whom you have sent, through your poor lady, so many presents? Vy, who took him from the shopboard, and gave him eddication, but you? I have always said and thought you made him a man."

"A *man!*—a pestilence—a demon!"

Although poor Mrs. Denton had of late years made a slight acquaintance with numerous words, of which in early life she knew nothing, and which at the present period were certainly not benefited by her adoption, these were not of the number. She saw, however, that

Mr. Vining was someway very angry, and very sorrowful too, and there was a brilliance in the glances of his deep-set eyes that almost alarmed her. Fearful that she had said more than she ought, and in some way betrayed the counsels of a son, who was the pride of her heart, and, moreover, the support of her declining years, and who, although he professed contempt for vulgar ties, had been really kind to her, she hastily arose, and saying, "She would see Augusta again soon," bustled out of the apartment.

Scarcely was the door closed, when the poor girl, raising herself from the couch, and throwing out her arms, cried, "Papa, pray come to me."

"My child," said Mr. Vining, turning immediately towards her, and bending tenderly to receive her embrace, "my dear Augusta, I know what you would say. Like myself, you have been hurt to think that we have brought so much affliction on such worthy people; and that such nefarious practices have been pursued by your own relations."

"Not my relations," said Augusta, bursting into tears; "my angel mother never could be the child of that conceited, vulgar, wicked woman; it is quite impossible. She is an impostor."

Mr. Vining shook his head in token of dissent.

"My mother was very good, and taught her children to be good."

"True, my dear; but it is the misfortune of your grandmother to be under the tuition of her son, a circumstance that most frequently occurs in a rapidly-improving country. I do not believe she is either a bad-meaning woman, or by any means a woman deficient in abilities; but 'a little learning is a dangerous thing,' not only to the possessor, but his connections

sometimes. It is evident, that in her blind admiration of her son, she has lost sight of the evil tendency of his conduct; nay, she has adopted that most dangerous doctrine, that the end sanctifies the means; and thought herself justified in inflicting injuries upon one party, in order to confer benefits upon another."

"But you will not strip Blanche Livingstone of her fortune, papa, even for my sake?"

"You will soon be of age—very soon, and you can then judge for yourself. Indeed, you can do it now. If your uncle resembles his daughter, he will renounce the estates he holds, although it is certain your own father never intended him to do so; but it does not therefore follow, that you should compel him to make further restitution, and thereby impoverish him and his family. If you do that, in my opinion it would be right in him to defend his case, and give himself a chance of retaining *all*. That he would have a chance, I really believe, if it were only in consequence of the length of time which has elapsed, and which has established your father's intention."

"If it were not for one thing," said Augusta, blushing, "I am sure I would not have any part of the estates; for I was very happy before I heard of them, and I have never been happy since."

Mr. Vining re-echoed the assertion; but tenderly kissing Augusta, he entreated her to forget all uneasiness, and endeavour to compose herself, as he must now hasten to fulfil a promise made to his son, and also to meet his attorney.

Many a time had he most anxiously revolved in his mind the task he had prescribed to himself; but now it pressed upon him more painfully than ever; for how could he perform an act of justice, without effecting one

of injury?—how give his orphan charge a father's property, without violating that father's will? Often did he wish that the long-treasured secret had died with that beloved wife, who had held it inviolate so long, or that he had not committed himself, at so early a period, to pursuing a line of conduct involving such responsible effects.

Blanche repeated her visit in a short time, and found Augusta much better in her general health, but in a state of considerable vexation, in consequence of a paragraph, in a fashionable journal, reflecting on the character of Mr. Vining, which went so far as to insinuate that he only sought to procure the Livingstone estates, in order that they might eventually enrich his only son; but it was to be hoped when the heiress appeared in the world, her choice might fall on some man of rank and power, who would disappoint the hoary plunderer.

"You must not allow these things to vex you, my dear. But it is not for me to advise, who have suffered more from the abuse thus directed against my dear father than tongue can tell. How so many people, from different quarters, could speak against a man whose conduct has been so upright, whose intentions are so pure, I cannot imagine."

"But a *many* did not; it was one, only one, depend upon it. Ask me no questions, dear cousin, but rely on the fact, and let it be your comfort. Nor have I any doubt that the same malignant influence has been exerted in the present case towards us. How I rejoice that he knew nothing upon a point that—that—I mean as to the latter part of the speech!"

"You are quite enigmatical, my dear: how you on the other side of the globe should discover our enemy on this, I can't imagine. But I am willing to believe

your assertion, for it is a comfort to think we have only one enemy, where I thought there were many—I mean scribbling, stinging enemies, who only sought to wound those who were already suffering. I did not mean—"

Blanche felt herself blush all over, and she could not look at Augusta, so, snatching up the paper, she busied herself with it, and at length observed, "The latter part of the paragraph only goes to wishing you married, or inferring that you will marry when you have got into the world."

"And pray don't people marry everywhere? Can one be seen in no country but this? Englishmen are to be found everywhere, and probably under much more interesting circumstances than balls and routs offer."

"Very true; and in the east marriages are contracted so early, it is almost surprising that you are single now."

"My mother never allowed me to mix in society, lest I should marry soon, for it was always said my health would never be stable till I was five or six-and-twenty. Besides, she always wished me to marry in England, though she dreaded the climate; but since then, you know, I have seen a great deal of the world, cousin."

"You have seen a great deal of land and water, but I should think very little of the world."

"Oh, yes! at Madeira I formed many acquantaince."

"True, you were detained there by painful occurrences; your situation there must have been very distressing?"

"Indeed it was most pitiable; and so *he* thought, for I am sure he pitied me sincerely; but he was himself a truly afflicted man. People may say what they please about the pleasures of heirship; but I know there are hearts that feel sincerely in some cases, notwithstanding——You are very pale, dear Blanche! are you ill?"

"Oh, no! but you surprise me. Surely you are about to say you gained a lover at Madeira?"

"I am, my dear; and such a lover, so good, so handsome, and accomplished! But don't mention it for the world. Just in the present position of his affairs and ours, Mr. Vining insists that things should be suspended, nor has he the least desire to hasten our marriage, for he is a sincere mourner."

"It is—it is!" gasped Blanche; but no further sound issued from her lips.

"Well, I might as well tell you all; you wont mention it, I am certain—it is Lord Castlemore. He was at Madeira with a brother, who died there, in the same house with ourselves. He rendered us every assistance, waited till Mr. Vining was better, and came home in the same ship; but we parted at Falmouth, for he is gone to Scotland. But I must not talk so fast; I never do it but when I speak of him.—I am sure you are unwell, and I talk too much for you."

"I am a little uncomfortable, I grant; but I shall be better in the air," said Blanche, rising, but as instantly sinking down, for her trembling limbs refused support —she appeared on the point of swooning.

Augusta rang, restoratives were procured; but as soon as she could speak, Blanche so strenuously insisted on the efficacy of fresh air, that she was permitted to depart with only increased attendance.

Truly sorry was Augusta for an illness so *mal-à-propos*, for having broken the ice, she longed to make her the auditor of all "her own heart's history," since she had first found she had one, in consequence of her acquaintance with the present Lord Castlemore.

As a circumstance, which awoke no suspicion and but temporary trouble, prevented *her* from enlarging

on this most important fact, perhaps we had better do it ourselves.

At the time when Blanche, as we have seen, returned suddenly to her own home in a frame of mind unpleasantly agitated, the real admiration she had excited in Edmund was sensibly shaken. He saw she was proud, and feared she was capricious, wavering, and subject to all those faults which pride is calculated to produce. He felt assured that she had seen further into the state of his affections than himself, and that she now repelled with *hauteur* even the homage which so lately was tacitly accepted. He considered himself acceptable as a companion, but forbidden to look further, and supposed the implied refusal given to him as a *younger brother*.

Under this feeling, he was less mortified than disappointed, and his heart pitied at least as much as condemned her. When afterwards he heard harsh judgments and sneers passed upon her, he became her advocate, under the belief that some circumstances, to which he was a stranger, had occasioned the adoption of manners foreign to her nature. Although determined never to subject himself to the pain of refusal, he ceased to school his own heart on the necessity of removing thence the memory of her manifold attractions.

The shooting season became one of great injury to Lord Castlemore, who, finding himself somewhat better, entered with avidity into the pursuits of those around him, and being remarkably expert as a sportsman, was thereby led from one place to another, amongst a wide circle of friends, everywhere excited to new exertions, until at length the false energies thus called forth failed at once, and there was a sad necessity of relinquishing everything, and proceeding immediately to a mild climate, and a state of perfect repose.

The ensuing winter was passed by the brothers at Montpellier. But as soon as he could travel, they set out for Greece, under the idea that novelty of situation would atone in some measure for the inactivity to which he was compelled to yield. From that time they were kept in perpetual motion, for the state of the country forbade them to traverse those places they most desired to visit. As, on the whole, the viscount's complaints appeared most relieved whilst he was at sea, they now went from point to point down the Mediterranean, and having found at Gibraltar some old acquaintance, were induced to stop there for a short time, and afterwards to proceed to Madeira for the second winter.

The weather was very bad during their voyage, and the vessel devoid of comforts. In this comparatively short trip, more of danger was encountered in a twofold sense than they had ever known before; and from the time of landing, Edmund ceased to hope that the object he had sought so earnestly, and at certain periods appeared likely to have realized, would ever be secured.

In fact, the warmth of Madeira, instead of invigorating the invalid, seemed to enervate and oppress him; yet he could not be brought to leave the place. The hope which is in pulmonary cases an ameliorating attendant, in general, forsook him entirely, and he sought only to meet his approaching end with the firmness of a man, and the humble faith of a Christian. In all his endeavours to this end his brother assisted him, and was his nurse, physician, and, in one sense, pastor. In the painful yet holy duties in which Edmund's whole heart had been so long engaged, it will naturally be supposed that "all trivial fond

records" of his acquaintance with Blanche had been obliterated; and so he thought himself, for he was conscious of only one solicitude, one constant and overweening object of tender anxiety and of eternal importance.

Many writers have traced the progress of the most insidious, we might almost say the most endearing of all diseases, have told of hectic bloom, sparkling eyes, attenuated frames, the apparent restoration of some moments, the utter prostration of others, the fond lingerings of the soul towards the world it is quitting in the brightest season of existence at one time, and its glorious aspirations to a better in another. They have dwelt on the decline of a lovely maiden, withered in the day of her beauty. Perhaps the couch of a young man, taken in the day of his strength, intelligence, and usefulness, is still more affecting.

They who know these scenes the most intimately, are the least able to describe them. Scenes indelibly engraven on the heart cannot, therefore, be transcribed on the paper. Are they not indeed sacred deposits in the most hallowed sanctuary of memory, on which we dwell in solitude, but desire not to expose, even to elicit sympathy? And why should we harrow up the hearts of others, or our own, when no good will be gained to either?

It is enough to say, that when the awful hour arrived, however long expected, the heart of the affectionate brother was tried to its utmost. Perhaps he would have sunk into utter dejection, if his better feelings had not been aroused, from learning that an English gentleman had been taken so ill with fever, that his recovery could hardly be expected. The account was rendered more interesting, from the intense sorrow said

to be displayed by his son, a boy about twelve years old, and that of his step-daughter, which, though less violent, was even more affecting, together with the alarm of various attendants, who expressed for the sufferer an attachment and veneration, which proved his value.

For some days, the now Lord Castlemore could no further contribute to the relief of this distressed family, than by gently withdrawing poor Frank Vining from the vicinity of his father's apartment to his own, and endeavouring to engage him in some pursuit which would wean him from his sorrow. This was not very difficult at his time of life, and the employment was of course beneficial to him who gave, as well as to him who received attention. He became more anxious on the subject of the stranger's illness, than he could a few days since have believed possible. Like all persons who have been long hovering round the couch of disease, he had become wise in symptoms, and his inquiries after the patient, whilst they evinced compassion towards the stranger, gave a beneficial exercise to the suspended kindness of attention which had been happily exerted for his brother; and long before he had been seen by Mr. Vining, he believed himself indebted to him for every promise of amendment he felt within his emaciated frame.

But it was not until the fever had fled, and the weakness it had left made itself felt, that Mr. Vining was actually benefited by attentions, and indeed gifts, which in his situation were valuable, and which had formed part of the travelling accommodations of the late invalid. It will therefore be concluded, that as soon as it was possible for Mr. Vining to bear the entrance of a stranger, he became anxious to see and thank his benefactor.

Frank on tiptoe preceded Lord Castlemore to his father's room, and as he approached the bedside Augusta rose from the chair she occupied near it. The circumstance of again so soon approaching a sick man's couch, was in itself affecting to Lord Castlemore, and the happy boy's grateful expressions brought tears into his eyes; but the appearance of his sister was so striking, that for the moment he forgot all else. He had associated in his mind, as Frank's sister, a girl about his own age, and was utterly unprepared for beholding a beautiful young woman, under every circumstance that could awaken interest.

Miss Livingstone was a little above the middle height, and gracefully rather than perfectly formed. Her complexion was delicately fair, and, in that respect, peculiarly striking to a man who had for so long a time been accustomed only to bronze or olive complexions. She was dressed in mourning—in that respect, as well as in her features, greatly resembling Blanche, at the time when he had seen her; and from the nurse addressing her by her name, it immediately struck him that as he had never heard of any co-heiress, this must be a cousin, or perhaps a dependent relation.

The shy and languid girl, "blushing at the deep regards she drew," was quietly retiring, when Frank whispered loud enough to be heard, "Now sister, didn't I tell truth, when I said he was as handsome as he was good?"

It was now Lord Castlemore's turn to be a little confused, but Augusta saw it not. She only saw and thought she had never seen such a man; whether owing to his being a lord or not, she could not say, but something whispered Desdemona's wish to her heart, "That Heaven had made such a man for her."

Mr. Vining's recovery, though sure, was slow; for life is not re-invigorated quickly, after such a shock at fifty; but every day gained a little; and every day saw Lord Castlemore pursuing his wonted avocations, in contributing to a sick man's comfort. He had no immediate call to England, and he suffered a vessel bound thither to go without him. Perhaps he lingered near the ashes so dear to him; perhaps he desired to continue attentions so beneficial to a family who evidently half adored him.

As Mr. Vining gained strength, and became more intimate with his young friend, he revealed the situation in which Augusta was placed with respect to her uncle, and mentioned the provisions he had made for entering on an immediate prosecution of her rights, for which purpose all the necessary documents were already in England.

Lord Castlemore was decidedly of opinion "That in justice, Mr. Livingstone ought not to be required to make good the money he had innocently expended; but of him personally he had no knowledge. With his daughter he had some acquaintance, previous to his long wanderings with his brother; the cousins greatly resembled each other."

But an increased acquaintance showed Lord Castlemore, that although Augusta was somewhat older than Blanche in years, she was much younger in knowledge, not merely the knowledge acquired by education, but that acquired by thought. But there was an innocency of mind, a gentleness of manners, a disposition to kindly and grateful feeling, that rendered her extremely interesting. The very languor contracted in her native country, as a characteristic of the climate, aided the charm of her dependent manners. She appeared to him

endearing in the very helplessness of her nature, yet capable from its affectionateness of every energy required in her station. If she were with so much beauty modest and domestic, benevolent and well-disposed, might not a husband whom she loved implant principles also in a soil so promising? In his opinion she resembled her cousin (that fair girl who alone had ever touched his heart), in all but the evil qualities he had suspected.

With this degree of predilection in her favour, and sensible of the charm of sympathy in his own feelings (for poor Augusta was an excellent listener to one whose tongue to her ear dealt only in honeyed accents), it was no wonder that in a situation in which there was no dividing interest, every hour rendered her more necessary to him. To her he was a perfect fascination, and had he been even the least of a coxcomb, he would have perceived that the poor girl was gone whole ages in love, at a very early period of their acquaintance.

They came home together, and mutual dependence for conversation and amusement brought them so closely in contact, that before their arrival in England, it was impossible for Lord Castlemore not to see that he held the happiness of this lovely and artless creature in his hands, and not to feel that the trust had endeared her to him so much, that he was ready to think he had never loved till now. Yet even when he thought of her most fondly, he never forgot that in an union with her he should have the power of benefiting her cousin. Perhaps, for human nature has its weakness in the best-disposed, pleasure might be given in this case from pride at times; but there were others, when a more benevolent feeling, or a more noble, because pious motive, actuated him; and he earnestly desired to con-

tribute to the happiness of one, whom he believed to be a most affectionate and dutiful daughter, a high-minded and well-conducted woman.

Notwithstanding the perpetual opportunities for declaration, and the many little incidents which, by revealing the feelings of both towards each other, called for explanation, yet a something inexplicable to himself delayed it until the moment arrived for their separation, when the utter inability of poor Augusta to suppress her feelings, not only awoke his own with ten-fold ardour, but showed him clearly the impossibility, as a man of honour and conscience, of quitting her with any doubt of his intentions.

In speaking afterwards on the subject with Mr. Vining, he alluded to the custom in India of marriage immediately following declaration, and observed, "That not only were the wounds of his heart too green for allowing himself to indulge the joy such an union was calculated to produce, but that he felt it a due honour to the lamented brother who had loved him unboundedly, and bestowed his all upon him, to abstain from the celebration of his nuptials, until the time when he had fulfilled certain wishes as to the management of his estates, and the reward of persons resident upon them, according to directions offered only to his own ear, and, therefore, sacred in his sight."

Mr. Vining was fully of opinion, that not only did his own perception of duty demand delay, but that in the situation of Augusta it was peculiarly desirable. In three months' time she would be of age, and competent to act for herself; and by becoming acquainted with her kindred, should they receive her kindly and acknowledge her claims, would learn how far she ought to insist on her rights, and where she should forbear to

urge them. It would be to him a most welcome circumstance to resign his charge and her fortunes into the hands of one on whose worthiness he had full reliance, and whose rank and fortune would place the orphan in a superior situation to any of the family to whom she belonged.

Such was the pain of parting to Augusta, which followed their landing, together with a cold taken in consequence of leaving the ship in the evening, that on her arrival in town she was really very unwell. She had the additional want of a friend, to whom she could reveal the important and all-engrossing secret of her heart; to the other wants, Blanche had, in the kindness of her nature, imagined; and it was no wonder that she was delighted with the appearance of her cousin, and had become eager to procure her as a confidante.

But under the circumstance of her engagement, in proportion as she was charmed with one relation, so had she become disgusted with the other who had welcomed her arrival. Although the most considerate and courteous of men, being in truth a man of humble heart, not less than superior mind, she yet could not fail to see that the vulgar presumption, and still more the deficient principles, of Mrs. Denton, must be disgusting to Lord Castlemore, who could scarcely tolerate that intercourse between them which the nearness of relationship demanded. In this difficulty she looked also for relief to her cousin, who had left on her mind an impression of good sense and right feeling calculated to relieve her in every emergency; therefore this would in due time have been laid before her; but, of course, the love-secret preceded it; and "a very vexatious thing it was that poor Blanche should be taken ill, and

obliged to leave her when she might have been so very useful, and have listened to the two letters Lord Castlemore had already sent her."

From this long but necessary digression we must now return to that unhappy and apparently ill-fated girl.



VI.

Off with the Old Love.

WHEN poor Blanche had closed the door of her dressing-room, and allowed the long pent-up tears of surprise and sorrow to flow freely, she was to a certain degree relieved. Nevertheless she became sensible of a load of grief in her bosom, which she could not account for, and knew it was her duty to eradicate. We say "could not account for," because, until her friend Louisa had raked up as it were the embers of a flame which never had burned strongly, she knew not that the weakness she lamented still existed in her bosom. Alas! it was evident that the snake was "scotched, not killed;" that her power of resigning fortune, and feeling content with mediocrity, though purchased by many severe lessons, or granted to many penitential prayers, was distinct from the destruction of love in her bosom. On the contrary, it might have been fostered by the very means taken to subdue her pride, and humility have grown up together with love, when the object of such love was chosen exclusively for his virtues.

Be that as it might, Blanche now saw clearly that this love also must be sacrificed; for how otherwise could she attain a resigned, contented, cheerful spirit,

capable of performing the duties by administering to the happiness of her parents, and exercising those economic cares, in conjunction with charitable offices, which still remained to her? How much, in the first place, must it cost her to retain all her still kindly feelings towards that stranger who had arrived as from another world, to take not only her inheritance, but that to which she could have clung as a substitute more dear? How often must she reason on the subject of her cousin's innocence of intention, before she could compel herself to feel satisfied with her conduct? Would not her heart be wrung with grief, when the language of congratulation was expected from her lips?

Some little consolation arose from having received this shock from one ignorant of her feelings, which she could not bear to subject to any human observation, save that of her beloved mother. Yet she could not bear to add to that mother's sorrow, by showing her their acuteness through the medium of writing. If she could obtain relief by speaking, yet at the same time prove her own power of resisting the pressure, it would be indeed a comfort; but on no consideration could she whilst absent add a mite to the burden.

To her great surprise, that very evening Lady Beautree told her, "That since her lord's disorder had become stationary, she thought no impropriety could be imputed, if on the following morning they called together upon Augusta Livingstone." She thought everything strange was rising around her, in order to overwhelm her.

"When all is said and done," observed the lady, "she is my own dear Augustus's child, it appears, and has all the lineaments of a Livingstone; and it is rumoured that so soon as your father has put her in possession of

the estates, which you know he is prepared to do, she will be married to a most unexceptionable *parti*—as far as my informant could learn, a nobleman of acknowledged merit."

Again Blanche felt her heart beat, and was sensible that her colour varied. She was not capable of making any reply beyond assent to any proposal Lady Beautree made.

"On second thoughts I will go alone, for unquestionably your feelings may be tried more ways than one. You are not looking well, and have indeed been shockingly confined of late; but as Sir Henry assures me that for the present we have nothing to hope or to fear, and I shall soon make the first change in my mourning, I must open my house again to my friends, and give you a little pleasure. I hope the presence of Augusta will not hinder you from enjoying it?"

"Certainly not, if she considers my father's liberality in the light in which she ought to do, and is herself liberal."

"It is rumoured that such is the case. Nay, I have been assured that the nobleman with whom she is to be united, declared to her guardian a determination not to accept from your father more than the last year's rents at the utmost. This seems very singular in a young man of fashion, who is probably in debt, but so I was told this morning. As your father will be coming soon, we shall hear all the truth from him."

"My poor father!" cried Blanche, bursting into tears.

"I beg, Miss Blanche Livingstone, you will never take this liberty in my presence. Seeing people cry, tears my poor nerves to pieces; and as I have just given you an instance of my desire to spare your feelings, I have a right to demand self-control from you."

Blanche retired to her own room for a short time, and then returned with a calm, if not joyous countenance, and one in which not the most distant trace of resentment could be descried. She made tea, and prepared it in the way her grandfather preferred, feeding him herself, and receiving from him thanks in the only way he could now express them. It was customary to wheel him into the drawing-room for this refreshment, after which he sometimes had pleasure in listening to his granddaughter's harp for half an hour; at others, he was lost in stupor, or appeared in pain, in which case he was generally taken thence to bed. On the present evening he was more alert than usual, and looked eagerly for his wonted amusement. Little as Blanche was herself disposed for "the concord of sweet sounds," she hastened to fulfil his wishes, and found in the exertion her own sense of trouble ameliorated, and her affection for the helpless invalid increased. Still she earnestly desired to return to her own parents. The restlessness of grief was upon her, accompanied by the desire to hide it, not less than the hope to subdue it hereafter. But this she felt could only be the work of time, and in solitude she might accomplish more than society promised to effect.

The following day, not only did Lady Beautree perform her promise of visiting her lately despised granddaughter, but proposed immediately taking her into her own house, and introducing her into the world under the most flattering auspices! Mr. Vining could not oppose this, seeing he had no female friend to whom such a charge could be confided; and no person living could be so proper, or to herself so honourable, as her noble grandmother, whose well-known love of etiquette and family pride, at once proclaimed to the world the

reality of Augusta's pretensions. He thankfully assented.

Indeed, the very sight of this daughter of her best-loved son, together with her modest submission, seemed to awake more of the mother's heart in her bosom than could have been expected in Lady Beautree. She appeared to consider her own person, as well as pretensions, revived in the stranger. Although she could not fail to see that which every one remarked, the extraordinary likeness between the cousins, yet she pleased herself with tracing alone in that of Augusta, those traits she held most *distingué*, or to herself most endearing. Unfortunately, partiality itself could not forbear to see that Blanche had greatly the advantage as to the development of form, and perhaps still more in carriage, for the habits of the east had been unfavourable to both; in addition to which Augusta had certainly a latent delicacy of constitution, which induced a languor in her motions, inconsistent with the youthful character of her countenance.

For the present, she was not only well, but in a state of exhilaration beyond all that could have been expected from the gentle apathy of her general manners. The novelty of her remarks, although their originality was their only recommendation, her surprise, pleasure, and simplicity, added to her beauty, stamped her at once the queen of fashion in the gay and noble circle to which she was now suddenly introduced, under circumstances so flattering, and at a period when dissipation is so fascinating, that we cannot be surprised at the all-absorbing influence which, in a short time, the gaieties of life obtained over her.

As soon as she perceived that her dress was copied, and therefore admired, even by her own sex, she became

anxious to procure every possible novelty, and as expense could be no object to her, to exhibit such a variety and richness in her habiliments, that none but the highest and wealthiest could possibly rival her splendour or infringe upon her walk. As Blanche had great taste in dress—a circumstance which generally accompanies a love of nature and knowledge of the fine arts, with both of which her mind was deeply imbued—it mostly happened that the costume of Augusta, which was admired at Almack's, and extolled in her grandmother's *coteries*, had been suggested by her. Hence, in a very little time, that cousin, for whom she had from her first appearance felt both love and admiration, became to her a person of the utmost importance, superior even to the indulgent grandmother, who contrived for her eternal parties, provided her with the most noble chaperons, when her own ailments, or the increasing infirmities of her lord, forbade personal exertion, and even indulged her growing caprices with a tenderness which ought to have excited her unbounded gratitude, and, at least, some degree of consideration for the peculiarities of her situation.

It may be asked, whilst thus the sick man's house was rendered the focus of gaiety, and his slight slumbers subjected to the disturbance of midnight entrances and morning egresses, "where was Blanche? Had she retired to the safe shelter of that home which was still left to her parents, though in diminished circumstances? Or did she, as an humble imitator of her cousin's style, a conscious sharer of her cousin's personal charms, and a partaker, at due distance, of her relations' favour, still remain in town, the pitied, despoiled, and comparatively-shunned Miss Blanche, who must now take any partner she could get, and accept of the second place in the

second carriage of any dowager, who deemed her beauty still so striking as to win the beaux to her *cortége?*"

We answer, Blanche remained in town at the earnest request of her father, who had settled every point in dispute with Mr. Vining, in a manner equally creditable to both. He had promised to give up the Livingstone estates complete and entire, with all the improvements made by his own considerate care and wise expenditure, to his niece, on her becoming twenty-one; and he would then agree to accept from an equally honest man, a deed of complete renunciation of those moneys once accruing from a property he had every right to deem his own.

No doubt Mr. Livingstone desired Blanche to remain for a couple of months longer, partly because at the end of that time his niece would be of age, and he would be obliged to return for the fulfilment of his agreement, and could then take his darling back to the home he held to be equally dear to them both, and was happy in having secured to the excellent woman from whom he had received it; and partly because, notwithstanding the shortness of the stay, he perceived the value of his beloved child's services to his afflicted father, whose situation rendered him far more deeply interesting now than he had suffered himself to be during the whole course of his son's life.

Blanche at some times pined for her mother, and turning with disgust from the pleasures in which she was a sharer in the evening hour, sickened for the country; but in the early part of the day, which she invariably devoted to her grandfather, except for a short drive demanded by her health, she found herself more at ease. A stranger might have thought, from the expression of her countenance during these two periods, that she had an actual pleasure in her weari-

some duties during the morning, and that in the evening, a sense of being eclipsed by her gay cousin induced a shade of melancholy, if it did not arise from religious objection to the gay scenes in which she occasionally mingled. Observations of this nature not unfrequently met her ear.

Blanche was now too much accustomed to examine her own heart, not to know that none of these causes affected her. She had the fondness for society, and the curiosity also, which in early life are a portion of the very being in every intelligent creature. She was aware that unless she allowed herself some amusement, her spirits might be so depressed by her wearisome employment, as to render her incapable of becoming hereafter the cheerful companion and daily comfort of her parents. The fact was, she dreaded seeing Lord Castlemore, and witnessing the attentions he would pay her cousin, in the first place; and in the second, she saw, with the most friendly alarm, those dispositions in Augusta, which could not fail to render her a most unsuitable wife for a man of his principles and disposition.

The incense paid to Augusta everywhere, Blanche placed to the account of her being in possession of a large fortune as well as beauty; for she could not fail to know herself to be at least equally handsome. Although her manner might not have the *naiveté* of Augusta's, she must be sensible that her powers of conversation far exceeded those of her cousin, whose mind she desired to inform and improve, in order to fit her for the station she expected to fill as a wife, and the mistress of a large establishment. Having wisely compelled herself to consider Augusta the future wife of a man she must no longer love, but earnestly desired to esteem to the end of her life, one with whom she must

necessarily have some intercourse as a relation, she endeavoured to render him the only service she could, by a medium which would of course have added to her own happiness, could Augusta have found time to attend to it. But a new world was opened to her view, and its seductions had not only conquered her apathy, but weakened her love—that love which had at one period been so evident as to have induced a declaration, as much from pity as from passion, on the part of her admirer.

When Augusta first became an inmate with Blanche, great was the trial to the latter, in consequence of the former seeking her society perpetually, in order to read, for the twentieth time, some fragment of a letter from Lord Castlemore, or tell over again what she thought the first time she beheld him, or how he looked when he bade farewell to the grave of his brother; in short, any of those trifles connected with the memory of the beloved one. That in the society of her grandmother these effusions were suppressed, appeared perfectly natural. But that in the course of a "little month" Augusta should have become so much a woman of the world, as to veil her feelings, or control her desires, appeared strange to Blanche, and she felt as if it were a relief she ought not to enjoy.

Yet surely she could not be called upon to rouse the dormant flame of either party? If it were indelicate in *her* to check the passion for expense Augusta had contracted, still more to her own internal feelings would it be difficult to recall her to her allegiance, and thereby facilitate an union, which, however frequently she might contemplate it, was always a source of pain. Yet if her heart was properly subdued, "if with due humility she had accepted, at God's hands, the lot he was pleased

to bestow, grateful for the inestimable blessings still spared to her, ought she not also to attempt this arduous duty?"

Just as she had determined to enter on her task, in as playful a manner as possible, she was called upon by Mr. Vining, who had a letter in his hand, which he held towards her, with the air of a man in a state of considerable vexation.—"Read that—read that; and then tell me, if you can, what Augusta Livingstone means by such conduct."

The letter contained a few hasty lines from Lord Castlemore, saying—"That two of his letters to Augusta being unanswered, though the last was very urgent for reply, he greatly feared that she was ill, knowing that her constitution was unequal to bearing the exertions pleasure required, when carried by misjudging friends to the extent in which he perceived, by the daily journals, she had pursued it."

Having glanced over the letter, blushing for her own weakness in feeling the writer's name still thrill through her bosom, she laid it on the table, saying, "Would you have me speak to my cousin, sir? or will you contrive to do so yourself?"

"Speak to *her!*—one might as well ask the wind to listen. She is never to be seen at home, except the house is full of people. I do believe she has taken leave of her senses altogether; to be sure, poor thing, there never was any great stock: but what is worse, she has lost her heart also. My Frank has been ill for more than a week. I told her of it, and she has never once been near him—the only child of her mother."

"Poor boy, I never heard of it. What is the matter?'

"You never did, I daresay; for she forgot it in the next half hour, most likely. As to the matter, I know

only the boy is very unwell, can neither eat nor play; and I don't see that the doctor does him any good."

"Take me with you to see him. I am quite at liberty, for my poor grandfather is about to lie down after his dinner."

"The dinner you carved and fed him with? Well, well, who knows but you are better for your loss? I most thankfully take your offer. But first enclose this letter to your cousin, that we may give her a chance for writing by the post."

Blanche feared this could not be done, but she obeyed his wishes, and accompanied him to the hotel where he still lived. A very little observation served to show her that the air of London, and probably its irregularities, as furnishing too much excitement, had produced the derangement in Frank's constitution; and she suggested a necessity of sending him out of town.

"I see that would be the best plan, but what can I do? He is my *all*. I cannot trust him out of my sight."

"I could put him in the sight of two pair of very kind eyes for you, to which in a short time my own would be added. Let him go down to Heathfield Park, and he will be soon perfectly well again. Francis, you would like to go where there are plenty of deer and horses, and full liberty, would you not?"

"If you were there I should, or if papa were there."

"If Zamor went with you, would not that do? I will allow you to use my own pony; and I will give you the prettiest hound you ever saw in your life, called Cæsar."

"Let me go, papa. I am sure I shall get well if you do," said Frank, seizing his father's hand, and looking wistfully in his face.

"Ay, pray do," said Blanche, taking the other hand,

and looking into eyes in which something like a tear was glistening.

They were all standing at this moment with their backs to the door, when it was thrown open by the Indian servant, who uttered words Blanche did not immediately understand. A bounding step followed—an eager arm encircled her, and the words—"Dear Augusta, how I rejoice to find you *here!*" were uttered by a voice still capable—nay, more capable than it was wont, of reaching her very heart.

"Ah! my lord, you are come back, and I shall soon be well," cried Frank, as he threw himself on the neck of Lord Castlemore, who now perceived in the blushing girl before him, not his affianced bride, but one still tenderly remembered, and whose present position indicated such full forgiveness of the past, such an acquiescence in the disposition of Providence, as to prove that a dispensation of evil had been rendered a source of improvement.

But the thoughts crowding upon him were interrupted by Mr. Vining, who, shaking his hand, said, "Let me not lose a moment in rendering your mind easy. Augusta is, I believe, very well. I took your letter into Berkeley Square at a time when I thought myself secure of finding her, but she is gone to some breakfast out of town."

"She has never been to see me since I was poorly, and I have been *very* poorly," cried Frank.

The deadly paleness of the poor boy's complexion confirmed the assertion, and perhaps led Lord Castlemore to think he had been alarmingly situated, and he exclaimed eagerly, "This is perfectly unaccountable to me; I could not suppose she could neglect her brother."

"Nor has she intentionally," cried Blanche; "she had no idea that Frank had more ailment than a cold inflicts. To severe colds she is subject herself, yet does not suffer them to keep her at home; and her engagements are so numerous, being in many cases of my grandmother's making, that she really has no time."

"Ah! well, if she has no time, she has a good advocate, that is certain; so pray, Frank, be content. Your sister is in the situation Lord Lyttleton ascribes to his lady-love—

> 'She would have answered with a sigh,
> But that she had not time;'

and I trust Lord Castlemore will be equally indulgent. I do not like quarrels of any kind, and although those of lovers are considered renewals of love, as an old man, I think links had better not be broken that they may be soldered up again."

Blanche felt inexpressibly uneasy. The open way in which this betrothment was spoken of struck her as indelicate the first moment; the next she thought it justifiable, considering the nearness of her relationship, and held it to be the first of those lessons she must accustom herself to receiving. There was undoubtedly nothing in the manners of Lord Castlemore which indicated either the ardent or the angry lover, as he made no reply to Mr. Vining's observations, but, to her great relief, began to inquire with much interest after poor Frank's symptoms. After having heard also Blanche's plan for assisting him, he concurred heartily in it, adding that, after seeing—after a little rest—in short, he would take him to Heathfield Park himself.

"My father is coming up soon, and will I hope take me back; but I think Frank had better go in a day or

two. The weather is so fine, and the country so beautiful, it is wasting life sadly to spend it in London, especially to the young," said Blanche.

"Or the old either," said Mr. Vining. "I am sure, if my duty to Augusta did not keep me one more month, I would leave it; but duties are imperious things, and yours are not likely to be so soon got over as mine, young lady. You cannot leave your grandfather."

"But I hope he may be removed into the country."

"You always loved the beauties of nature, Miss Livingstone," said Lord Castlemore, "I well remember, and had cultivated those tastes which render it a steady preference. Are you still fond of flowers? have you your old passion for elm trees?"

"Oh, yes! I am constant in all my attachments."

These words were hastily uttered, and certainly meant nothing but a short and civil reply to questions awakening reminiscences that had better have slumbered. But the moment they had passed her lips a torrent of blushes pervaded her countenance, and a dread of misconception overpowered her.

She rose to return. Mr. Vining, whose carriage was waiting her orders, thinking that her evident confusion arose from anxiety for Lord Beautree, proposed that Lord Castlemore should accompany her; it would facilitate his meeting with Augusta, adding, to her great relief—"and *you* could take a short airing like that, my dear Frank, with Miss Blanche?"

"I should like to go with her, certainly, but I don't want to see Augusta, only to scold her. She is a pretty sort of a sister, indeed; no more like what she was at Madeira than I am like the French giant or the calculating boy."

In order to see how far these assertions were just, it

will be necessary to look into that line of conduct which might have influenced any young woman in poor Augusta's situation.

When Lady Beautree first extended her maternal countenance to the young creature she had so long stigmatized as illegitimate in consequence of the knowledge she certainly had of her second son's disposition, she did so, not only because the proofs of his marriage were admitted on all hands to be unanswerable, but because the child of this marriage had insured a position in society which advanced the family importance. The Lady Castlemore elect was a person she could patronize. But when, from her beauty, her sudden attainment of wealth, and the somewhat novel and romantic history attached to her, she became at once the fashion, new ideas inspired the mind of the baroness on her behalf. "Were there not three young dukes, and a duke neither young nor old, two marquises, and five earls, still unmarried? Might she not obtain a husband and a coronet of a higher grade? Could the Dentons be silenced as to her relationship with them, surely the girl herself might be led to see her own interest. She was apparently tractable, and could be taught to exchange love for ambition, most probably."

To this end, Lady Beautree fell in with every wish for pleasure, more especially all those which mixed her with the higher circles proposed by Augusta, taking care always to impress upon her mind the belief that in rank alone such pleasures could be found. In a short time she found the dazzled mind of her *debutante* fully alive to the privileges of her order, and imbued with due honour for the claims of the highest in those gradations of rank which it cost her no small difficulty to understand. It is yet certain that the homage paid

to her beauty was still sweeter than that which her grandmother taught her to estimate. If her heart had known no preference, it would not have been the cares of her elderly relation which could have prevented her from accepting it from any insinuating flatterer. Thus ambition and vanity were useful in repelling the encroachments of each other, but between their collision *love* was comparatively extinguished.

Yet there was in Augusta's mind as well as manners so much natural ingenuousness, and the kindly affections had been so habitually exercised, whilst those of pride lay dormant, that there was every reason to expect the return of a man like Lord Castlemore might restore her allegiance, and nothing could be more *mal-à-propos* than his sudden arrival to Lady Beautree's schemes and wishes. That lady had just returned with Augusta when the carriage containing the unexpected lover reached the house, and he was introduced by his affianced wife, under the unpleasant circumstances attendant on great fatigue in her own person and some little disappointment as to the conduct of a certain marquis towards one whom every other person distinguished.

Drawing up to the extreme height of her tall and still striking figure, Lady Beautree received her future relative in precisely the last way a man of good feeling could desire, thus adding to the chill his heart had already received, and which the extremely fashionable air of Augusta did not restore, although he really thought her much handsomer than when they parted. The surprise his appearance gave her excited a blushing confusion in her countenance, as flattering to himself as disgusting to Lady Beautree, who imputed it to the vulgarity in her nature, proceeding from the

wrong side of the house—it was the blood of the Dentons.

Altogether vexed, on whom could she vent her feelings save Blanche; and her, with acrimonious *hauteur*, she thus addressed,—"I understood, Miss Blanche Livingstone, you would remain with his lordship during my absence."

"I did remain with him till he dropped asleep, and then—and *then*, having learned from Mr. Vining that his son was very ill, I accompanied him home."

"Umph! umph! you left Lord Beautree to see a child well enough to return with you—a proof of filial affection entirely new, I apprehend. Your friendship for strangers has been very singularly bestowed in the present case. It is a stretch of philanthropy which I am unquestionably at a loss to comprehend.

Poor Frank, with a whimsical expression of fear contending with the anger he thought himself justified in feeling, exclaimed, looking towards Lord Castlemore, "Why don't you explain about my papa coming here to bring your letter to Augusta, and remind her of all my poor mamma said about me? It is very hard Blanche should be blamed for doing her very best to pacify me, and do me good, and to soothe my papa—very hard indeed! I am sure she is the best nurse that ever was in the world to an old man, and might be so to me."

"Old man! what does the boy mean? This is too annoying really, Miss Blanche Livingstone."

"I meant poor Lord Beautree that shakes so, and whom Blanche feeds so lovingly every day. Isn't he an old man? His hair is very white; my papa's is only gray, yet he is an old man."

Lady Beautree, disdainfully making her way towards the other end of the room, muttered something, with

infinite disdain, about "papa and his pet!" on which Augusta began to find fault with Frank for talking too much—boys of his age should be silent.

"You have heard little enough of my voice lately, Augusta, and you are likely to hear much less. I am going very soon."

The words were spoken in allusion to his intended removal; but the low tone in which they were uttered, the evident weakness of the speaker, who was strikingly like his mother in the delicacy and beauty of his features, gave them the air of a prophecy. Augusta started, as if the fondly-beloved parent she had lost looked upon her through those fair features, to reproach her for broken promises and alienated affections; and yielding to her feelings for the moment, she embraced the boy with warmth, and kissing his cheek, tenderly whispered, "Dear Frank, you know London is quite different to Bombay. It is not in my power to be with you always, as I used to be."

"No, dear Augusta, it is not. But I only want you to remember that you knew papa and me a long, *long* time before you knew any body here, and that you promised mamma you would love me, and be a mother to me—yes! you said a *mother*, Augusta, that night before —you may remember—"

A servant entered, to inquire if Master Vining was ready to return. Zamor presumed it was time.

At the word, Frank vanished. Augusta, looking round in a kind of half agitation, and with a thousand tender memories tugging at her heart, perceived that her disgusted grandmamma had withdrawn, and that her cousin had, in the silent humility of habitual submission, sought her usual charge, and resumed her habitual duties. No wonder that, unnerved by recent

excitement, touched by the remonstrances of Frank, and reproved by the observant silence of the only man who had really touched her heart, through the medium of awakened gratitude and real merit, she should suddenly throw herself upon his shoulder, and burst into tears—tears alike of joy for his return, and sorrow for the trials she had passed, and those which might await her.

And who will wonder that the lover thus appealed to, remembering her youth, beauty, and temptation, from the newness of the world, forgot all which had alarmed and wounded him, and in the kiss of reconciliation sealed the fate before him, though one of eternal importance!

VII.

Pride has a Fall.

THE peace thus restored to the betrothed did not for the present extend its benignant effects further. Lady Beautree was dissatisfied, because her views were thwarted. Mr. Vining continued in a state of offence towards a step-daughter whom he had always loved as his own child. Poor Blanche, however earnestly she sought to subdue every petulant emotion, could not fail to be at times irritated by her grandmother's injustice, or wounded by the increasing selfishness of her cousin. This, the easy-besetting sin of all persons born and brought up in the East, amid a servile, supple, and yet amiable race, in her appeared at first merely the dependence on others which languor inflicts. It took afterwards the shape of inordinate requisition of pleasure and expense, and gained the indulgence of Lady Beautree and her more familiar friends for "the dear pet, who must have all she wished for;" but *now* it assumed the domination of pride; for adulation, and the exercise of influence, whilst they benumbed the better sensibilities of her nature, inspired the worse with new vigour.

From the time that Blanche was not necessary as a

confidante, and had fulfilled her mission in directing the labours of the toilette, she became a person of little note, and would, in the eyes of her cousin, have soon appeared in the light of a positive dependant, if her native dignity of mind, and her superior information, had not rendered her so truly important in society, that Augusta, and even her grandmother, felt her value. The humility of Blanche was an inward principle, contending with, and subduing pride, in all its ramifications, conscious that it was an innate evil of her nature, and one, as a Christian, which she must seek through divine grace to subdue. It did not show itself in any peculiar form of dress, any affectation of self-abasement. She did not in the slightest degree resemble the lady so admirably depicted by Mrs. Hannah More, in her inimitable Cœlebs, "who bitterly lamented her sins, but maintained that her husband could not name a single fault she had." When in society, although truly modest, she was not therefore abashed. She sought not to awake pity by retiring manners, or condescended, by indirect submission to her cousin's opinions, to excite interest for herself. She knew her own powers and her own rights, in the circle in which she moved, and had no desire to investigate, relinquish, or increase them. Being self-subdued, she was always self-possessed, ready to contribute her own share in the discussions which were passing, and from the constant exercise of benevolent intentions, generally found alike capable and willing to increase the happiness of all around her.

If she could be said to withdraw timidly from any one, it was unquestionably Lord Castlemore. But to this act of self-conquest she urged herself so effectually, that in a short time the unbidden blush ceased to flush

her cheek at the mention of his name; and when he sought her opinion on a new work, or offered her an observation made during his long and painful travels, she did not recollect that her grandfather wanted her, and suddenly leave him.

But when the current conversation of acquaintance became so far confidential, that her opinion was solicited on alterations to be made in Lord Castlemore's furniture, for her cousin's reception; when her influence with her cousin was entreated, in order to induce her to become "a little more domestic, a little more thoughtful;" and more especially, when from some casual circumstance, the upright mind, pious sentiments, or extraordinary powers of her future relative appeared, then Blanche felt the difficulties by which she was surrounded—then her heart would wish that "Heaven had made her such a man:" but she bent in resignation to her loss, as coming from the Disposer of all things, and she resolved again, as she had often done before, to obey not less Lord Castlemore's wishes than her own ardent desire to render Augusta's habits and sentiments more like those of her future husband.

This would have been difficult to any person, but was a task of extraordinary delicacy to Blanche, because she was younger than her cousin nearly two years, which is a considerable portion of time in so early a period of life; and it appeared to strike Augusta, either as an act of presumption, or as a mode of revenging herself for the loss of her expected property. "I must listen to you," she would say, "because certainly you have taken the whole affair in a most admirable manner. But pray don't preach longer than you can help, dear Blanche."

"You are in such a perpetual state of excitement, in

consequence of your interminable engagements, that you have no time to think for yourself, dear Augusta. It is no wonder that I, who sit silent for hours together watching our poor grandpapa, should sometimes think for you."

"I wish you would act for me too."

"I have done so with Mr. Vining, by writing as you desired. But I cannot help you with Mrs. Denton, who has sent over and over to beg you will call upon her. Her son is dying."

"I am no physician, and if I were, he is certainly the last person on whom I should exert my skill. Besides, I never saw the man—I may thank Lady Beantree for keeping that plague from me."

"It is not likely you should either love or esteem the uncle you never saw; but he has been all in all to his mother. She has unquestionably claims on your attention; perhaps she may be in need of pecuniary assistance."

"Oh! impossible; she is always very well dressed."

"Persons in London are frequently so, whose means are only temporary; and this is more than commonly the case with those who live by literary efforts. Very great authors have been very poor men; well then may those be poor who tread the same thorny path with inferior pretensions and unrecognised abilities."

"I don't really think that is the case, for I am sure I have been told by somebody, since I came to England, that although many people called great might starve in old times, yet things are better managed now-a-days, even for the least. At all events I cannot help them—I am as poor as Job."

"Do not jest in such a case as this, dear Augusta, even for your own sake. Help them, I entreat you, if they want help."

"I must then say to you, Blanche, help me, for I want help. Next week your father will enable me to repay you. I know you have plenty of money."

"I have enough for my wants, but no great plenty; after next week, my father must necessarily be less liberal. However, I will do my best for you in this case, for I am sure it is a pressing one. Here is my purse—pray go directly. This is the card; it is no great distance, and a very respectable street."

At this moment Lord Castlemore was announced, and Augusta, relieved rather than rejoiced, cried eagerly, "Pray go for me, dear cousin; you will do it better than me altogether, I know you will. You have more tact than I have."

"Impossible! In me, that would be intrusion, which in you is demanded by—"

"Hush, hush! Go, I entreat you," were the words reiterated by Augusta, whilst the byplay of her features earnestly entreated silence as to the subject of discussion. Replacing the purse, of which she had taken possession, in the hands of the owner, she added, "There now, do go, my kind Blanche. I am quite sure no person living is more calculated for an errand of mercy than yourself, and my carriage is at the door."

In the manner, rather than the matter, contained in these words, there was something of *art* which grieved Blanche far more than her cousin's extravagance had alarmed her, for she held cunning to be the sin from which Lord Castlemore, as an upright man, would most revolt; and although Augusta had shown much of cold-heartedness in many cases, she had never appeared in the least given to deception. Indeed, the self-satisfied can rarely be so situated as to require so despicable an

ally; but when they do, it is not pride which prevents them from using it.

Thoughts of what her own weakness had been, and anxieties respecting the situation of Augusta's mind, so occupied Blanche, that she had nearly reached the place of her destination before she recollected that she was about to carry succour, or at least pay a visit of friendship and consolation, to the very persons whom Mr. Vining had informed her were the persecutors of her father, and herself in him, and who had, in point of fact, given them all far more acute pain than the loss of fortune could possibly inflict; for there is no arrow in the quiver of misfortune to be named with that of infamy.

"How singular is my situation!" exclaimed Blanche. "I am lending a little money to her who takes from me and mine a great deal, not as a temporary, but lasting alienation; and I am deputed literally to do good to mine enemies—enemies who have 'persecuted and hated, without a cause,' that excellent man, my father; and in their cruelty to him, injured the health, and destroyed, for a time, the happiness of my inestimable mother. Well, be it so. I trust when I have seen them once more well and happy, I shall forget all this, and forgive these enemies more entirely than I do now. Yet surely I do forgive them *now*. There is no rancour in my heart against them, which is a great comfort. But let me not exult in this feeling; above all things, let me guard against spiritual pride."

Although announced as Miss Blanche Livingstone, it is probable that her Christian name was omitted, for the moment she entered a small neat drawing-room, appropriated to Mrs. Denton in the house of a genteel shopkeeper, that unhappy mother ran to the place,

threw her arms round her, and, in all the agony of sorrow, proclaimed herself the most miserable woman upon earth; for all hopes of preserving her son were now denied her, or nearly so. "And you, Augusta, have never even seen him! I have tried in vain to see you myself a hundred times.—I beg pardon, it is Miss Blanche. God help me, I have cried myself blind; and really to see you, ma'am, when I have troubles of all sorts upon me, is quite awful."

"If you have any troubles distinct from that which is the greatest, and one in which your granddaughter unhappily cannot help you, pray tell her, through me; and I am sure she will do her best."

"Oh, no, not she! Didn't I beg her to give me five pounds last Monday, that I might get a physician? Didn't I say a prosecution was hanging over our heads, and that—"

The tale of sorrows was interrupted by the servant of the house coming to say, "The gentleman who called last night was come again;" and before the refusal to see him, which evidently hung on Mrs. Denton's lip, was uttered, a tall elderly man, apparently an officer, entered, and without noticing Blanche, who had turned to the window, thus addressed the alarmed person, "I have been informed, ma'am, by the proprietors of this paper, that your son could inform me whether the Honourable Richard Livingstone is now in London or in the country?"

"Down in Gloucestershire, sir."

"Are any of the family in town?"

"Lord and Lady Beautree are, I believe. My son is no way concerned in that paper: he isn't, I assure you, sir."

"I did not suppose he was. I know nothing about

it, beyond what the proprietor or editor mentioned in reply to my question."

The gentleman bowed and departed; and Mrs. Denton ran to tell her son, that the fears he had awakened from his previous call were vain.

"Ah, what a burden must existence be," thought Blanche, "when a simple inquiry like this can awaken terror of some impending evil, or self-reproach for some intended injury!"

Her thoughts were interrupted by Mrs. Denton's reappearance, with a countenance indicative not only of relief from her late fear of the stranger, but of hopes for her son, for whom she had dispatched a messenger for the physician; and therefore Blanche lost not a moment in presenting her with more than her present wants demanded, and of returning homewards. Recollecting she was short of silk, for a purse she was netting for Frank Vining, she made a pretty considerable *detour* in order to procure it, concluding that Augusta could not want the carriage, and knowing that Lady Beautree, who was herself poorly, was seated with the regular invalid.

Just as the carriage drew up to the door, the gentleman who had inquired for her father at Mrs. Denton's left the house. In alighting, he looked earnestly at her with what she thought was a sorrowful expression of countenance, but might only be that of surprise or recognition. She saw more plainly than before that he was a military man, not a lawyer, and she did not recollect hearing her father mention any acquaintance in early life with a General Sir Jacob Hales, which the servant told her was his name. "Surely," she said, "this stranger will bring us no bad news again from distant lands! yet why did he cast on me such a pitying look?"

Whilst her maid assisted her to dress, she learned that the stranger had been closeted with Lady Beautree during an hour, which proved he must have gone immediately to the house on leaving Mrs. Denton. She therefore inferred, that he had probably been an acquaintance of her late uncle's, and blamed herself for allowing causeless anxieties to agitate her nerves. Yet she came to a resolution of returning with her father, at all events, the following week, for her affectionate solicitudes were keenly awakened by the recollections which her visit forced upon her, together with this trifling incident. Again and again tears of tenderness gushed to her eyes; and when the second dinner-bell rang, she could not help comparing herself to poor Mrs. Denton, and allowing that "there may be great agitation where there is little guilt."

She found, contrary to her expectations, perhaps to her secret wishes, that Lady Beautree was able to take her place at the dinner-table; Lord Castlemore was also present, a dowager lady, intended for Augusta's chaperon, and two other guests. Miss Livingstone was late, and only took her place at table after others were seated, a circumstance which drew rather severe comments from her grandmamma, which were heard with surprise by every person present, since they all knew she was hitherto privileged in every respect.

Whether her anger with one young relative made her kinder than usual to the other, they knew not, but it was certain that no one present had ever known her appear so interested in Blanche. She dwelt upon her attentions to Lord Beautree, and how much he evidently missed and lamented her absences, short as they generally were; said she knew her heart pined for the country, which was no wonder, for really Heathfield Park

was a perfect paradise (though, by the way, her ladyship had never visited it but twice), and adverted to the great importance and local value of her daughter-in-law's family property, a subject no one had heard her mention before, but which they concluded was now descanted upon, by way of consoling Blanche for the departing property of her father.

To Blanche herself, these compliments sounded like auguries of approaching misfortunes. She had not been accustomed to consideration from her grandmother, nor had her mother's superior character ever elicited from her the meed of praise due to her many virtues, or even to her family claims.

Every one heard these things said with pleasure, for they alike loved Blanche, and respected the pure integrity of her parents; but none entered more warmly into the spirit of these remarks than Lord Castlemore. He was pleased to find, as he believed he had done, Augusta capable of detaching her thoughts from the giddy whirl of dissipation in which she was moving, to consider the wants of the poor and needy, in a place where she could personally know little of them; and he was led from thence to conclude, that when settled, either at his country-seat or her own, she would, in the exercise of benevolence, and the improvement of her taste, find a happy succedaneum for the more intoxicating pleasures in which he had frequently seen her mingle with apathy of late. The conduct of Blanche, in so kindly and unaffectedly accepting the office of almoner, to the cousin made rich by her own relinquishment, struck him as an act at once indicating true humility and exalted goodness; and fondly as his heart turned, or sought to turn, towards one cousin, his admiration, esteem, and reliance, rested on the other.

Whilst they were seated at dessert, a servant whispered something to Blanche, which occasioned her to quit the room hastily. From the change visible in her countenance, the gentleman nearest to her apprehended that some painful information had been received by her.

On expressing this belief, Lady Beautree observed, "There was nothing particular in it, for Lord Beautree never resigned himself to sleep till Blanche had bade him good-night. He had merely happened to make signs for her sooner than common."

"Miss Blanche informs me," said the lady, "that she does not go to the Countess of Fairborough's to-night."

"No, she declined it, very wisely, in my opinion. She would have been subjected to much attention, from which her delicacy naturally shrinks, as being on the very eve of her cousin's majority, and she must have gone to an expense inconvenient under existing circumstances; and to tell the *whole* truth, as we are friends, she would have been certain to meet a young nobleman, whose attentions, I am sorry to say, she determines to decline."

Lord Castlemore was about to render her ladyship's communications still more explicit, when he too was called out, and in a few moments it was judged necessary that Lady Beautree should be informed that her lord had experienced a new seizure, that medical men had been sent for by Blanche, and the case had assumed the appearance of immediate danger.

All now was confusion and distress. The gentlemen visitants departed, the lady applied herself solely to cares for her friend, Lord Castlemore remained in the sick chamber, and Augusta retired to her dressing-room, from whence her maid issued every ten minutes, to inquire how things were going on below.

It appeared that the sick nobleman had been so seized, that all the lower part of his frame was benumbed, and in a manner lifeless; but the stroke had, to a certain degree, released the upper, so that he spoke better than he had done for some time—seemed glad to see Lady Beautree, but was so much affected by her tears, that she was entreated to retire. He then turned to Blanche with great affection, and appeared to take comfort in her presence. Seating herself upon his bed, she supported his head upon her shoulder, gently fanned him at some times, and at others wetted his parched lips with a feather, which seemed to give him the only aid of which he was sensible, since he frequently ejaculated thanks and blessings, from time to time faintly adding, "Don't go."

For nearly two hours had Lord Castlemore, driven by this sad scene to recall the most affecting hours of his life to remembrance, slowly walked from the chamber of death to the drawing-room, and thence back, in order to hand forward the liquid to Blanche, assist the servants in altering Lord Beautree's position, and feel if any pulse still throbbed in the cold white hand that lay immovable on the sheet. Several times he had ascended to Lady Beautree's room, and united with her friend to persuade her to take an anodyne and lie down on a couch, promising to remain in the house till morning, and to dispatch messengers to Mr. Livingstone and Lord Beautree's steward, both of whom she earnestly desired to see.

Lord Castlemore had just finished the notes in the drawing-room, and was rising to carry them to the butler who was an old attached servant, then with tearful eyes gazing on his dying lord, when, to his utter astonishment, Augusta, in the full blaze of dress, appeared be-

fore him like a beautiful spectre, so unexpected was her visit in such guise. "Augusta! my dear Augusta! you do not think of going out to-night? it is impossible!"

"Lord Beautree is not dead yet?"

"True; but he is on the point of death!"

"You are mistaken; Doctor —— said he might exist twenty-four hours."

"Or might die in as many minutes."

"But as three or four hours have passed since then, the chances are that he will live till to-morrow evening."

"That is not unlikely, I grant. But surely, without adverting to affection for *him*, since he was incapable of inspiring more than pity, your love for your grandmother, who has been all kindness, should induce you to remain for her support and consolation."

"She is asleep."

At this moment Lady Sayer entered the room, and said, in a tone of gentle remonstrance, as if referring to some past conversation, "I should not think of going to the ball indeed, Miss Livingstone, if the two young ladies I have mentioned did not depend upon me. I cannot think it right for you to go."

"Nor does Augusta think it right herself, ma'am. Her carriage, or my carriage, shall take you wherever you please, and wait your commands for returning."

"It will be time enough for you to dispose of my carriage when you have a right over the owner. As it is one you appear very willing to forestall, I shall take the liberty of using it whilst it is mine, my lord."

With these words, pronounced with a haughty and determined air, Augusta walked towards the door. Ere she reached it, Lord Castlemore sprang after, and seizing her hand, drew her almost forcibly into the

small room on the same floor fitted up for the invalid. The doors were all open, for the purpose of obtaining the air required by him, and of course, ere she could possibly disengage herself, she stood in the presence of disease—of death.

At the sight of her cousin thus apparelled, Blanche first remembered that such an engagement as this long-talked-of ball was on the tapis, concluding in her own mind, that Augusta had been shut up many hours in her dressing-room, and by some means kept in ignorance of the situation in which the head of the house was placed. Her first impulse was that of preventing what she held to be an act of profanation, and holding out the only arm at liberty, she exclaimed emphatically, and most probably mechanically, "Don't go!"

"Don't go! don't go!" re-echoed the deep hollow voice that issued from beneath the bed-clothes.

If, after this startling and even awful adjuration, all had happened to remain silent, the stricken votary of pleasure would have yielded to the feelings such a scene was calculated to inspire. But, alas! the voice of Lord Castlemore, of that beloved Edmund, which within a few months had been music to her ear, that music which was the food of love, dispelled the momentary sense of awe and almost terror which pervaded her mind. Remembering only that she was offended, and also seeing from the reflection of a tall mirror, the splendour of her dress, and the beauty of her person, she turned away and rapidly descended the stairs.

A cry of sorrow and horror involuntarily rose from Blanche, and recalled Lord Castlemore to a new exertion for *her* sake, since such was the anger and contempt he now felt for Augusta, it could scarcely be said he made it for his own.

Rapidly following her, and passing by her slowly-moving *chaperon*, he again seized her hand, and in a voice tremulous with contending passions, which half suffocated his manly bosom, addressed her thus,—"If, under the idea that I have taken too great a liberty, you seek to punish *me*, for Heaven's sake do not do it thus. Your conduct will be, in the eyes of all respectable people, an everlasting reflection upon you; and, in short, I cannot, *will* not marry a woman capable of it!"

"Marry! who asks you to marry? not Augusta Livingstone, my lord!"

The heat and turmoil of passion ebbed in Edmund's bosom. In another moment, other thoughts crossed his mind, and he whispered, whilst following rather than leading her to the carriage, "I have been told, more than once or twice either, that ambition in your mind had banished love. I now see that love itself, ay, positive, all-absorbing love actuates your bosom, but not for me: go! enjoy your triumph; I bestow upon you the liberty for which you sigh. I—I—I—"

"You mean to say, you renounce me; I thank you; it is exceedingly obliging. Farewell, my lord!"

At this moment Augusta ascended the carriage, and Lady Sayer followed; but not until Lord Castlemore had, in her hearing, and that of two or three servants, repeated, "Farewell—farewell for *ever!*"

For more than a minute Lord Castlemore stood fixed as a statue on the steps, then ashamed of the violence of that emotion which he felt even more than he displayed, he re-entered the house with a lingering step, and made his way into the solitary drawing-room. Though angry with himself for being angry, the more he retraced the late painful scene in his memory, the more did he view, with a disgust amounting to horror,

the conduct of Augusta. He might get over the impropriety, however glaring, in a young woman new to the habits of the country; but to show so little attention to Blanche, such ungrateful neglect to her grandmother, and in truth a disregard to himself, indicative of disdain for his opinions, indifference to his feelings, told him that with such a woman he never could be happy. He had heard of several whose attentions had been apparently very acceptable to Augusta, and he had seen quite enough of Lady Beautree (although at this moment an object of his sincere pity), to be aware that higher rank would win her sanction to receive such addresses on the very steps of the altar. Yet his present sensations were not those of a jealous man, and in a short time they ceased to be those of an angry man. He remembered the impression first made upon him, as arising from the display of her sensibility, her artlessness, and in fact the passion she had imbibed for him. under circumstances calculated to interest one so lately the mourner for a mother, and he felt that pity, rather than preference, had led him to an engagement which since then he had most sacredly held binding, and would have most religiously fulfilled, if she had not thus imperiously rent it asunder. He recollected, that notwithstanding his surprise at her intention, he had been in the first place gentle in his persuasion, for he certainly hoped she would be won to his purpose. How she could have persisted in it, or even thought of it, during the hours of her absence, to a man of his domestic habits, and strong natural affections, appeared inscrutable. Although for a moment he had believed, and therefore said, "*Love* alone could have impelled her to such strange conduct," yet a calmer review told him that vanity, not love, had been its prompter, and

added, "that love could never live in that bosom to any virtuous and happy purpose with such companionship. I will return immediately to the country. I will finish the business which in my fears for her health was interrupted. A very few minutes will suffice for an interview with Mr. Vining, who rises early, and *then*—"

Lord Castlemore, as this thought passed his mind, turned into the adjoining chamber. There was Blanche, pale (but with eyes which showed she had been weeping) still administering the same tender offices; but they were no longer acknowledged. The labouring chest, the breath rattling in the throat, showed the last dregs of life seeking to depart; the glazed eye, gazing around unconsciously, spoke the awful truth. A body was returning to the dust, a soul about to receive its eternal sentence—painful was their separation.

"Pray, my lord," said the housekeeper, "take Miss Blanche away; she has been here many hours, and taken nothing at all. She has done her best, and can do no more."

Lord Castlemore went round to the side where she was sitting, and earnestly entreated her to retire from a scene so afflictive; but she said only, "I would watch him till the last—pray for him to the last," and resumed her posture.

She saw him move to some distance and sit down, then suddenly rise and quit the room, as if unable to bear the recollection of his own past sorrows, for his handkerchief was in his hand. Her heart was touched with the deepest sympathy, and she was about to follow him, and to thank him, when a carriage drove to the door, and the footman's rap, though much lower than usual, resounded in the silence of that chamber of death.

Even the dying heard it, for he gave a start, followed by one still harder respiration, and was gone for ever.

The sound drew back Lord Castlemore, who perceiving that Blanche was upon her feet, took her hand, and drew her, now unresistingly, away. He seated her upon the sofa, mixed for her some wine and water, and seeing her weep freely, again left her a short time, in the hope that she would experience relief from tears; but on hearing many steps on the stairs, he suddenly returned, saying, "Your cousin is coming upstairs; as I never wish—never *intend* to see her again, I must leave you. Dear Blanche, sustain yourself, I beseech you. This is not a cause for much sorrow, although to you affecting, because we always love those to whom we are valuable. Farewell! Your excellent parents will soon be with you. For their sakes (would I might say for my sake), take care of yourself."

The hand which had been holding hers firmly—fondly, suddenly relinquished it. The door was closed, the one friend who had soothed her through this most awful night was gone, and for a short time, she felt as if hope and comfort were gone with him. Yet had there been something in his words that augured both. It was plain that he had quarrelled, and, as she concluded, parted in anger from Augusta; but yet they might be reconciled.

"I have brought you a little sago, ma'am," said the housekeeper, entering with that noiseless step, which we unconsciously adopt when in the vicinity of those who will never be disturbed again. "Mrs. Barnet is so engaged, dear heart, she cannot wait upon you to-night. Trouble upon trouble falls on this house, for certain."

Blanche shook her head in assent.

"First my young master gets killed; then my poor

lord becomes as it were worse than dead for months, and is now gone off entirely; then there was trouble enough come to my present lord, your noble father; and now there is another affliction."

"Another affliction! What can you mean, Mrs. Greaves? *Another?*"

"Yes, indeed, ma'am, and very loth I was to tell you. I said, 'Let Miss Blanche go to bed, and have a few hours' rest;' but no, it must not be, so I came to break it to you."

"Speak! I entreat you, speak!"

"Poor Miss Livingstone, it seems, was walking to her carriage, and there was a frightful crowd, and some way, just as her foot was on the step, there was a great movement. She fell, broke her leg, bruised her head, and was brought home in such a state as never was known. Poor Lady Sayer took all the care she could of her, and the doctors came in a moment, and they are setting her leg at this time. All the women in the house are with her; but she raves for you, ma'am, so I am forced to tell you."

"Poor girl! poor girl! How I wish Lord Castlemore had not gone!"

"Nobody saw him leave the house. You know I was with my lord, and they below was so flusterated as never was; but they carried her up the back stairs very wisely. The doctors came up *these;* but you know it was all over before then. It seems somehow very like a judgment, I must say."

"I beg you will not say so. How many improper things do we all do, without receiving punishments of this kind?"

With these words Blanche took the candle, and, with a beating heart, ascended to her cousin's room, from

whence sounds of moaning issued so loudly, that she was surprised they had not reached her. Alas! how little could she have expected that blooming creature, so lately rich in life, and health, and pleasure, should thus utter the knell of pain above the corpse of her deserted grandsire!

Loudly as the suffering Augusta had called for Blanche, yet she appeared to find no comfort in her presence. Physical evils cannot be shared, and for the present Augusta had no other, for pain is all commanding. As, however, medicines to allay it had been duly administered, and she was under the best professional attendance, after a time her anxious cousin had the satisfaction of seeing her fall into a stupor, which resembled sleep, and restored her lately-distorted countenance to its usual expression. This opportunity for seeing her grandmother, and imparting to her the change which had taken place, was thankfully embraced by Blanche, who would not depute the office to any one likely to speak of what was reprobated by all—the misconduct of the punished Augusta.

Lady Beautree, scarcely recovered from the effects of the narcotic she had taken, received the information with more calmness than Blanche expected, and that circumstance increased her difficulty with respect to Augusta, for it was impossible that a person so very seriously injured, could receive necessary attentions without increased attendants, or taking servants from their usual duties. Besides, she would by-and-by expect to see Augusta, and probably, in her sympathy for the sufferer, forgive the offender. The pursuit of pleasure was the error of all others she was likely to deem venial. Blanche felt that the truth must be told; but still she shrank from revealing it.

From this she was relieved by the entrance of Lady Sayer, who, after lying down for a few hours, was anxious to see the dowager, and exonerate herself from all blame in the accident. To the great relief of all, Lady Beautree did not suffer either the action or its consequences to trouble her much; but she expressed anxiety, to a feverish degree, for the arrival of her son and his lady; and insisted upon Blanche going to bed, in order that her haggard looks might not alarm them on their arrival, adding—"Henceforward they must be all to me; and I ought to consider their happiness in every respect. Lord Beautree was always the best of sons. You have heard me say so, Lady Sayer, a thousand times."

It was, however, certain that Lady Sayer had no recollection of such a circumstance, however merited it might be; but it was not the first time she had seen changes resembling that of her friend, in which, as a good-natured woman, of no "particular principles," she very cordially agreed.

Sweet were the tears that rushed to the eyes of Blanche, when once more she found herself clasped to her mother's bosom, and saw her not only in perfect health, but with that happy benignity of countenance which was natural to her, and which had been injured in London far more by the calumnies issued against her husband, than the reduction of fortune which fell upon him. "In truth, my dear," said she, "we have arranged everything so well, as to be sensible that our personal freedom, and therefore, happiness, was increased by the change; and since even the humblest of our dependants understood that our means of helping them were diminished, they seemed the more willing to help themselves. Our trial has elicited many virtues, and warmed

many affections toward us, which time and circumstance had cooled. But you were necessary to our happiness, Blanche, as we were to yours. I can see that you have suffered much."

"Yes, mother, I have in many respects; but I trust my own haughty heart has been humbled by it. Oh, there have been times when I wanted you so very—*very* much."

There was a suffusion over the pale face of Blanche, which told her mother, "that more was meant than met the ear;" and she hastily said, "Surely, my dear, you have no accepted lover?—no one, at least, for whom you ought to blush?"

"I have no lover at all," said Blanche, with a deep sigh.

"If then some wandering of the fancy only has given you this uneasiness, conquer it, my child, in silence. Confidence will but renew those thoughts it were unwise to retrace, and those feelings that must be repressed. Doubt not, when you are again with us, that you will be all *our own*. Yes, yes—the rose will return to the cheek and the heart of a daughter like you."

Their conversation was interrupted, nor could it be resumed in a family so situated, for there was much to do and much to think of. Even the day of Augusta's power, so long prepared for, and so much talked of, went by unheeded in one sense, though it was certain that Lord Beautree gave audiences to more than one lawyer, and that another had access even to the chamber of the invalid. The funeral of the late head of this ancient house was attended by his son, to their distant burial-place. Until that was over, all other business must necessarily be suspended, even if the situation of the expectant heir had been far different from the sad state in which she was placed.

Endless were the inquiries made after the health of one so favoured by nature and fortune, and who appeared to find in the list of magnificent names constantly handed to her, the only source of comfort that remained to her. Often would she lament the want of her brother Frank. One day she earnestly entreated Blanche to persuade his father to send for him, on purpose that he might regularly report every inquirer, as they sent, seeing that in the state of the house they could not call.

It had very naturally occurred to Blanche that the true cause of this anxiety was the wish to learn whether Lord Castlemore was amongst the number; but since she had neither mentioned his name, nor alluded in any manner to the circumstances of that eventful night in which she lost him, save as connected with her own misfortune, Blanche feared to awaken either her repentance or her resentment, lest the emotions of her mind should retard her recovery. She had learnt, through Mr. Vining, that the viscount had formally renounced all claim upon Augusta, in consequence of her declared pleasure. Lady Sayer had spoken openly on the subject of her conduct towards the marquis, whom her grandmother had sought for her. She said, "It was quite plain, that a handsome young man, whom nobody knew, but who was said to be distantly related to the noble lady who gave the ball, was evidently and almost insultingly preferred to him."

In consequence of the prompt and skilful assistance she had received, Augusta soon attained convalescence, and there appeared little reason to apprehend that continued lameness would subject her to long confinement. Beyond this medium, it was the opinion of her physicians she was not likely to proceed. She had taken

more liberties with her constitution than it was able to bear, previous to receiving so violent a shock; and she was earnestly advised to remove to a warmer climate during autumn.

"There can be no climate so good for me as my native one, and I greatly prefer Bombay to England. If I remove at all, I will return to the East," was her observation to Blanche.

"That is a very long way to go. Will you venture upon a shorter journey in the first place? I have promised not to leave you, and I will not; but I must say, my very heart sickens for my native air. Will you go with me to Heathfield Park?"

"Yes, as soon as they give me leave. I suppose town is empty now; few people iuquire after me?"

"Yes, a Mr. Elliston has never ceased to call twice a-day."

The pale face of Augusta was lighted up by a deep blush, and a smile of more radiance than Blanche had seen it assume in her most brilliant hours. "How strange," thought she "that a woman, beloved by Lord Castlemore, could be thus affected by any other man!"

"Mr. Elliston is going out to India. He is a distant relation of the Countess of Fairboro', who introduced him to me, under the idea that I could give him letters. We had a great deal of conversation. He is a most delightful person, and it is so pleasant to talk of one's native country. I went out of the house in a great passion, and was some way very uneasy all the evening; and he, to a certain degree, tranquillized my mind considerably. I must have had a presentiment of what would happen to me. Don't you think so?"

"No; the evil which *had* happened occasioned the uneasiness, not that which was about to happen."

"You think I did wrong in going—and I think so myself. Indeed, my very heart aches when I recollect the folly and unkindness of my conduct, therefore I put it out of my head as much as possible. What else can I do with such uneasy thoughts?"

"Pray humbly to God that he will render your repentance available for your improvement, dear Augusta."

"So I will, dear Blanche, if you will teach me how; but I am so ignorant, you cannot think! I am sure I am altered for the worse since I came to England, yet I have made exertions, for which my own mother would never have given me credit, and I always understood myself to be a very good girl, only an idle one."

"You have conquered your apathy undoubtedly; but then it was purely for the purpose of procuring yourself pleasure. It could not be right, my love, to cure one fault by the exercise of another."

"No; but I did not think of curing my faults; for, so far as I can see, a woman of my fortune can have no faults in the eyes of you English people. All I thought of was the grandeur and gaiety into which I had all at once started, and the homage I felt it delightful to receive. Very different thoughts have haunted me since I have been able to get up, yet too weak to be seen, both when I think of life and death. You are always so kind, that I open my heart to you freely. I hoped you would amuse me with something that would send these thoughts away."

"But I cannot in conscience do that, because I think sensible and good thoughts should be encouraged."

"Yes; but you do not know the pain of self-reproach, and blushing to one's self, as it were; to say nothing of remembering one's extravagance to-day, and



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one's meanness to-morrow. How shamefully I behaved to my grandmother Denton! and I have many other things of the same kind to think of; now you have not, Blanche?"

"Indeed, Augusta, I *have*. I was very proud once; and pride, if persisted in, would have made me selfish, vain, hard-hearted, and even cruel. I have been, and still am, sincerely sorry for these emotions, and deeply grateful for that spiritual assistance, through divine mercy, which has, I trust, to a certain degree, removed this evil disposition. I dare not say it is *eradicated;* for human nature is always prone to error, and requires watchfulness; besides which, we must pray for help from above."

"My poor mother used to talk much of praying with the heart, I remember; but I never quite understood her: you will teach me. I used to think, if I died, which, after all, is not unlikely, I ought most seriously to repent and pray; but I see clearly, if one lives, it is necessary also. I do really think you have been happier than I have all the season, because you did your duty. Lord Castlemore always said so. He would have given the wide world that I had been like you."

"This is the first time you have mentioned his name."

"Why, I don't much like to think about *him*. He is a very good man, and I used him very ill. Besides, I loved him very much once."

"Once?"

"Yes, I did indeed. The fact was, I had never seen a man I thought worth looking at, compared to him. Everybody was talking about him, admiring, and pitying him, at Madeira, so that I had the greatest curiosity in the world about him. Well, then, I did see him;







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and he came to us in our distress—behaved to us like an angel. Frank was always raving about his goodness. We had nothing else to talk about, and think about; for we were not like you. We neither read, nor drew, nor played, nor worked for poor people. We had no society—so it was Lord Castlemore's sayings, and looks, and all that, from morning till night. I thought of nobody else, but then I had nobody else to think of; and after he made me an offer (which was certainly, I do think, not very wise), I was very grateful to him, but yet a good deal afraid of him. So, altogether, I loved him—ay, loved him better than ever he loved me!"

"You do not know that, Augusta."

"Yes, I do. Many men have paid me more flattering attentions than ever he did, but then they were not his equals, perhaps. However, it is certain I was carried away with them and their admiration, together with Lady Beautree's continually preaching up 'rank! rank! rank!' as if nothing on earth was worth living for besides, and the very angels in heaven carried peerages under their wings, in order to class souls properly. This gave my poor head quite a turn. I wonder how he bore as much as he did from me."

"But you are now sincerely sorry, Augusta?"

"Very sorry I used him ill, Blanche; but not at all sorry we are parted. I am not good enough for him, not wise enough, not anything, in short, that a man of his description requires. He should marry a woman of his own grade, in rank, intellect, and character. I wish he had never seen me, poor man!"

This wish the heart of Blanche re-echoed; but she had not leisure for reflecting much upon her own situation, since it was now considered, both by Mr. Vining

and her father possible for that business to be settled, concerning which they were both anxious, since Augusta might be carried into the drawing-room without injury.

From her uncle and aunt, not less than their excellent daughter, the young invalid had constantly received the most affectionate attention. But beyond inquiring "when she would be able to see the lawyers and settle her affairs," her till-now-indulgent grandmother neither evinced interest in her recovery, nor sympathy in her sufferings. When that should be over, she mentioned an intention of setting out for Weymouth, to which place she cordially invited Blanche, who was now her especial darling, a circumstance imputed by her fond parents to a feeling of thankfulness, not less than affection, on account of her services to her grandfather; but their conclusions were not realized.

At the day appointed, all the necessary parties assembled in the drawing-room. Various papers were laid upon the table, clerks attended to witness the ratification of deeds, Lady Beautree and the dowager took their seats, and all things were ready for the reception of the heiress of the Livingstone estates, into whose hands the title-deeds, with all due formalities, must be assigned.

She came at length, leaning upon the arm of her cousin, with the assistance of her Indian servant. Scarcely could a painter have desired a more striking group. Augusta, pale and fair as the white muslin wrapper she wore, or the Mechlin that shaded her beautiful features, from beneath which a ringlet or two strayed upon her forehead, was the first object of attention, until the more perfect beauty of Blanche,

contrasted by her deep mourning, and rendered interesting by the quiet kindness expressed in her countenance, caught and detained it. The dark but handsome countenance of the Hindu, with his gay apparel, beaming eyes, and teeth of ivory, gave contrast and harmony to the picture.

When Augusta had been placed on a couch, drawn near the table, round which some gentlemen were sitting, Mr. Vining begged leave to introduce his share of the business first. To this end he produced the sum of money, with interest thereon, vested by Captain Livingstone on behalf of his posthumous daughter, and which, had she died in infancy, would have devolved to his wife. It therefore appeared, that he had presented her with her education, and the means of life up to that period, when her birth and rights were acknowledged by her uncle. As she was then removed from his care, and entered upon a new situation in which a considerable expenditure might be necessary, more especially as he expected her marriage paraphernalia to be included, he had engaged to pay her bills up to that day. He confessed they had absolutely astonished him; but in her present state he could make no further comments. Many had been presented only since her misfortune, and must be examined by her own eye before they were liquidated.

"I have been dreadfully extravagant, I know," said Augusta, in a weak voice; "but it was a worse fault than that, to neglect my brother, and to be indifferent to your uneasiness—*you*, who are the only father I ever knew, and who have been to me the best of fathers."

Every father in the room felt this humble acknowledgment touch the fibres of his heart, and Mr. Living-

stone's attorney hemmed twice, as if to clear his voice and gain power to read the documents before him.

The dowager Lady Beautree at this moment nodded to a young man, who left the room, but instantly returned with the elderly gentleman we formerly mentioned. "General," said she, "my son is on the point of making the renunciation of which we spoke. I believe you can save him the trouble. Permit me, Lord Beautree, to introduce General Sir Jacob Hales, late Governor of ——, in Canada."

"The young lady, your niece, whose features exceedingly resemble my friend Captain Livingstone's, is evidently unwell. Had not my mission better be opened to her by yourself, my lady, or some female friend, I would say, in private?"

"But I say *not*," said the dowager, emphatically.

"Surely, madam, if it is painful," observed Lady Beautree, advancing with an anxious air towards Augusta, close to whom Blanche was already seated.

"What can you have to say, sir?—surely nothing against my dear mother?" cried Augusta, in extreme agitation.

"That is impossible," said Mr. Vining; "be comforted, my love."

"I was your mother's first and *best* friend, Miss Livingstone. I cannot doubt her having named Colonel Harding as such; but—"

Mr. Vining eagerly offered his hand, which was cordially taken by the general, who continued to speak, "I am the holder of Captain Livingstone's will, and the only trustee now living; but out of six witnesses, four still survive. The validity is moreover proved, by the late Mrs. Vining's own account of the wishes of her husband. He had hoped that it never would be

called for; but in order to guard against contingencies, provided the testament I now bring forward. By mere accident, I read an article in an English newspaper, reflecting on Mr. Livingstone as an unjust uncle, which led to further inquiries; and as soon as my successor arrived, I lost not an hour in setting out for this country, in order to substantiate the will, and immediately saw Lady Beautree on the subject. The death of his lordship taking place that very night, together with the injury met with by the party most interested, compelled me to waive the matter, until sent for this morning by the dowager."

"The contents of that will we can all augur. Augusta, you had better retire—I will assist you," said Mr. Vining.

"No, thank you, papa. If I am not heir to the Livingstone estates, who is? that is the great question."

"Your father gives them untrammelled to his younger brother, declaring as a dying man, that he does so in consequence of a solemn promise given in very early life to the Earl of Livingstone; otherwise he should have bequeathed them to his elder brother, who was nearer to his own age, and with whom he had always been in closer correspondence and companionship."

"Then Blanche will have them!" cried Augusta, bursting into tears, which were evidently more the effect of previous agitation than of sorrow.

"I must add," said the general, thereby interrupting the negative on Blanche's lips, "that in his will Captain Livingstone gives proof of having made a handsome provision for his wife and her expected offspring, by a very heavy mortgage. It should be remembered, as a further reason for his conduct, that he

scarcely could suppose a female child would live, the mortality in India being at that time even more than common. Besides, we all know that from his very birth he was taught to believe that family claims, I ought to say, claims of family, superseded all other."

"Family pride, general, would be better still; and it is a plain case that 'he felt the ruling passion strong in death.' Most happily he has left his property in far better hands than his own, to one infinitely more fitted to adorn his station.—Don't cry, Augusta; you know Blanche could thank God that although *reduced* she was not *impoverished*. I have doubled your fortune, a circumstance you never heard of till this very day. If you had more, it would only add to your troubles."

"True, papa. But the bills—the terrible bills; I care for nothing else."

"Then care no longer; I will pay them all. I have been the innocent cause of doing this mischief, and I will take the consequences. My son is too young to be injured by my error."

"Pardon me," said Blanche, blushing and advancing timidly; "I should like to pay dear Augusta's bills, for I had a legacy left by my godmother, which most probably would cover them, only I am not of age."

"I will trust you, my child," said her approving father; "and I feel assured my friend Vining will see it right to accept our offer. We all acknowledge the more than justice, the nobleness of his conduct, and trust a British merchant will not deny a British nobleman equal rights in such a cause."

"Not I in truth, for I love and honour the aristocracy," said Mr. Vining; "and whatever you may think of my late censure, I can make great allowance for your brother. The innocent and virtuous woman

we alike married had unquestionably been guilty of great imprudence in seeking him as she did, and though amiable herself she came of a bad breed, as he perhaps might know. Then as to his unknown child, what could he feel for it? The little strong embrace was never felt by him. Round my neck were those little arms entwined; to me were given the endearments which taught me to become a father. That I never have forgot them, you have had proof; that I never will forget them, you shall see. Augusta, you will come home to papa again, and make Frank happy as you used to do."

"But Frank is well and happy at Heathfield, and I wish to go there for a time, I confess. Blanche first welcomed me to England, though I came her rival, and as people said her enemy. I was never *that*, God knows, but many a time I have behaved very ill to her. She is now my nurse, my instructor, my *all*—I cannot leave her."

Whilst Augusta spoke, the legal gentlemen considering themselves dismissed (for what has law to do with sentiment), began to bundle up their papers, when Lord Beautree, fully aware that his suffering niece ought to be removed, broke up the conclave, by saying, "Gentlemen, we have done less business with you than perhaps was expected, in a case where so many peculiarities arose capable of being submitted to your investigation, and liable to be decided upon by those admirable laws which we acknowledge as Englishmen, but have decided upon as fathers and friends to construe in our own way. In wishing you a good morning, I also desire *you*, Mr. Walter, my long-valued adviser, to make out a deed, devising to my niece, Augusta Ann Livingstone, one thousand per annum, secured on my

Beautree estates; and to you, Mr. Woolmer, the legal friend of my niece, I recommend due examination of the same, in order that hereafter—"

The speech was interrupted, for Augusta fainted away, and every person present decamped as soon as possible.

Whether the fair orphan had heard the words of her kind uncle was matter of doubt. In her state of health, it was no wonder that her physical energies were exhausted, and it was certain there was not one person present who did not think the conduct of her grandmother cruel and deceptive, in thus exposing her to a trial which she had borne in a far superior manner to what could have been expected, from one weakened by the adulation of the many of late, and previously ill calculated for trials of any kind. It was at least certain that her conduct had greatly exceeded the expectations of her friends, and her situation excited their tenderest compassion. By the direction of Blanche, she was conveyed to her own apartment, and after her restoration, soon sank into that state of repose her exhaustion called for.

VIII.

The New Lover Accepted.

REPORTS of every kind were soon spread on the subject of this change in the situation of Augusta, and as, in the first instance, her expectations had been magnified much beyond the truth, so were they now diminished, and her really handsome fortune deemed a mere pittance, on which a person of her habits could not possibly exist. From being an object of admiration and envy, she sunk to one of pity and conjecture; but as town was nearly empty, a very short time was likely to suffice for comment of any kind, and with a new season new stars would appear in the horizon. The only anxiety to the two cousins themselves was that of leaving London as speedily as possible, consistent with Augusta's safety.

So rapidly did she recover, after the day of trial we have mentioned was over, that the fourth morning afterwards everything was prepared for proceeding the first stage, whither Lord and Lady Beautree had preceded them. Blanche had just given orders for the carriage, when she received a message from Lord Castlemore, entreating to see her for a moment on urgent business.

His appearance bespoke his situation as a traveller, haggard and sleepless. The expression of his countenance bespoke distress of no common character; and when Blanche entered the room he appeared incapable of addressing her.

"I fear you are worn out," said she, "from some extraordinary exertion?"

"Extraordinary indeed! I have come direct from the Highlands of Scotland. There I heard for the first time of poor Augusta's dreadful accident, which I apprehend took place the very night I left town."

"She was brought home in a very frightful state whilst you were here; but you were gone before I was informed of it."

"I left town with post horses within an hour for my own place in the north. Finding myself ill at ease there, I set out on a fishing expedition to the Scottish lakes, and as I avoided company, and was out of the track of newspapers, heard nothing until last Wednesday, when I met a friend at Inverness who told me. I set out without losing a moment; and as the evil news increased upon me at Newcastle, I have continued my journey without intermission. You must pardon my appearance."

"Let me hasten to relieve you. Augusta is delicate in her general health, but recovering."

"And is, I understand, a cripple for life; her beauty too, of which, poor girl, she thought so much lately, gone for ever."

"I find you have heard an exaggerated account of that which was indeed a terrible misfortune."

"Whether it is so or not, I set out with the intention to offer what I trusted might prove consolatory to one so afflicted. You must know what I would say; the

goodness of your own heart, Blanche, will suggest the duties of mine. This is not a time to recollect either her fault or my resentment of it. I—I—I wish, that is, I would place myself in the same position I held before that fatal night."

Blanche burst into sudden tears; they gushed forth in the generous admiration of a congenial spirit, but were instantly shaken from her glowing cheeks, fearful that others of a different nature might succeed. She dared not trust herself to reply; and the words "kind, noble, and good," rather dwelt upon her tongue than were uttered by it.

"At Newcastle, from the paragraph referring to her father's newly-discovered will, I learned that which should have added wings to my speed. Alas! was it not enough that she should thus suffer in her person, but be doomed to poverty also? but from that—yes, thank God, from *that* I *can* rescue her!"

"Poverty!" said Blanche, colouring; "surely, Lord Castlemore, you could not suppose my father —"

"Pardon me, dear Miss Delaval. A person who appeared to understand the matter, in reply to some observations I heard another make on the subject, said, 'that so determinably had her father fixed the Livingstone estates on yours, that it was not in his power to alienate them."

"So far he was right. But my father had other property. Besides, Augusta was handsomely provided for, since Mr. Vining had generously suffered her fortune to accumulate."

"Mr. Vining; I had forgotten him—forgotten too, as it would appear, all I know of you and your connections. I pray you forgive me. It is certain, after all, I did *not* forget, for your image has been almost as

palpably before me as it is at the present moment. I know not what I would say."

"You are ill, and fevered with fatigue and anxiety; suffer me to order breakfast for you. I will speak to Augusta immediately; she will see you and thank you. In seeing her, you will be convinced that she is now little the worse for what she has suffered. I should say she is better—ay, much better."

"You must mean better in mind?"

"Mind, heart, and soul. She has returned, as it were, to her own artless self—nay, far better than that; she has learned to understand her errors—to lament them—to seek for strength from above, whereby to prevent their recurrence. She will, I trust, henceforward add to the simplicity of a child the strength of a well-principled Christian woman."

Lord Castlemore shook his head doubtingly as the last words were pronounced, and said something in an undertone, implying, "that he could never hope for mental firmness in poor Augusta;" but as the servant entered the room with the refreshment ordered, Blanche left it, and proceeded on her mission.

And what a mission! Never had she felt such profound esteem, such lively admiration, such deep-seated tenderness towards any human being, as that Lord Castlemore at this eventful moment excited in her bosom. She firmly believed, that as he was the only man she ever had loved, so was he the only man she ever could love, nevertheless one for whom such sentiments must be conquered; for was she not herself about to consign him to another?—that other her beloved cousin, one to whom her heart now clung as to a sister—one she believed worthy of him, yet not quite suited to him? The more she considered the matter, the more

decided became her conviction on this point.—"He will make Augusta the happiest of women," said she; "but I fear she cannot be all his mind requires. It is still evident that he acts from pity, not from love; that he doubts her wisdom, doubts his own attachment. Ought they, under these impressions, to marry, especially as he is acting as much from false impressions made by others, as from the generous suggestions of his noble heart?"

A light foot passing near her, roused Blanche from her reverie. She had unwittingly, in the absorbing and distressing thoughts that multiplied with conflicting energy upon her mind, sank down upon a *chaise longue*, in the gallery which led to Augusta's apartment. Silently breathing a prayer to Him "who ruleth the wills and affections" of his creatures, and trusting that "his strength would be made perfect in her weakness," she proceeded with slow but steady steps into the dressing-room of Augusta.

"Oh, Blanche, I thought you never would have come; and in all my life I never wanted you so much."

In answer to this adjuration, Blanche raised her eyes, and almost started at the strong contrast offered by Augusta's appearance to herself, and still more to the wretchedness of poor Lord Castlemore's countenance. So radiant was her countenance with happiness, that the bloom of health seemed to be suddenly reseated in the dwelling from which it had been so instantly dislodged. Never had her eyes shone so brilliantly in the hour of pride and triumph.—"You have the gift of second-sight, Augusta; you anticipate what I am commissioned to tell you. But it will be far better that Lord Castlemore should woo for himself; he will, at least, have his worst fears removed at a single glance."

"Talk not of him, dear Blanche, good as I know him to be; you have told me he was out of town, and perhaps it was I that drove him thence. Read this dear letter, from a warmer, fonder heart than his. Who among the many who have admired, adored Augusta Livingstone this whole season, would thus have written to the impoverished, the degraded, the relinquished girl? read it, *read it*, and with me rejoice in the bright spots that sometimes illuminate this cloudy world."

"If it is, as I conclude, an offer of the hand and heart of some worthy man, believing you bereft of fortune, let me first inform you, that Lord Castlemore has half killed himself with flying hither from the Highlands of Scotland for the same purpose. Nay more—with the full belief that you were made a cripple for life; and that the contusion on your forehead had irreparably impaired your beauty."

"It is just like him. He is a noble and a tender-hearted creature; but in this respect inferior to my correspondent, from difference of situation. *He* asks me to share his abundance—the other writes to entreat me to participate his competence, a competence to be secured by personal exertion. On the other hand, I grant it is very good in Castlemore to take me with all my faults. In that respect he deserves my gratitude far more than poor Elliston, who, from not knowing me, believes I possess every possible virtue."

"Mr. Elliston! The young man you met at your last —the ill-fated ball?"

"Yes, Mr. Elliston; he who thought of me when others forgot me—who waked for me when others slept; for never did the housemaid open the door for three long weeks, without finding him on the pavement, anxious to know how my night had passed. Not less

duly was his servant sent at the accustomed hour. See what he says. His letter is short, yet full. His first impressions were those of gratitude for my condescension, to which was soon added compassion for my misfortune. These sensations, aided by recollection of my person, became *love*. This love he could not dare to indulge, yet knew not how to fly from. Whilst thus situated, he received, in the same day, a lucrative appointment in India, whither he was previously going as a cadet, and information that I was stripped of fortune, an invalid for life, and that all my hopes of health depended on my return to Bombay, whither he is bound. He therefore ventured to solicit, not my hand, but my friendship—my society, in the hope that he may prove himself worthy of my entire confidence, and eventually of my hand."

"His conduct is very handsome and honourable—somewhat romantic, and more generous than prudent, but precisely that which our sex is most willing to excuse."

"If you, a calm, well-regulated English gentlewoman, say so, no wonder that an Asiatic like myself, indolent, but imaginative, the child of impulse and indulgence, should be charmed with it, more especially when I know the character of him who is thus devoted."

"Know the character of a man you never saw but in a party?"

"Undoubtedly I do. He was not introduced to me as the partner of a dance, but as a young man anxious for letters from Mr. Vining; and the countess, speaking of him, said, 'Assure your guardian that he is not merely a young man of family, but one of excellent education, and high moral character. His mother was my cousin, and never was woman more blest in a son.

To her comfort he devoted himself and his narrow fortune. She is dead, and he is at liberty to seek the means of life by honourable exertion.' With such men my early life was associated; of course, with such men I should be most happy and most respectable. The moment I was taken out of my circle, it is certain I became an eccentric planet, a baleful comet, a star of malignant influence, whose rays were brilliant, but never benignant."

Augusta was generally slow of speech, and seldom elegant in diction. She now spoke with rapidity energy, and that full conviction which generally carries conviction to the hearer with a contagious effect.

Blanche, accustomed to be herself the reasoning party, felt that she was now for the first time met by the "pleaded reasons" of her generally languid cousin. She could not abandon, nevertheless, Lord Castlemore's cause, since it appeared to include *defence* of him whom she felt to be still unrivalled; and she said in reply, after a silence of some minutes,—"All you say may be very true. But I trust you will see Lord Castlemore, Augusta. You will hear what he has to say, after which you will be better enabled to give the gentleman the answer he so richly merits."

"I have given him an answer: I wrote immediately. Did I not say how much I wished you had been with me in order to have advised, dictated my letter; not as to the matter but the words, for I am a poor hand at writing long letters."

"Dear Augusta, how could you do so mad a thing? What, in the name of wonder, could you say to a man you had seen but once?"

"If I had seen *him* but once, neither had he seen *me* more; and surely, according to his conception of the

case, I was the party most obliged. I therefore told him 'that my health was better than he appeared to think; that although my supposed fortune was changed, I had the best of uncles, to whose house I was going, and whom I would entreat to receive him as a friend during the period in which he remained in England. Surely this was a modest letter. I certainly meant it to be such; but to you, my own dear Blanche, I will not deny that I intended it to be encouraging, for what can I do better than return to my own country, and give my fortune—the fortune, in fact, far beyond my original expectations,—to a worthy man who loves me?"

"But what can I possibly say to Lord Castlemore?"

"Tell him the truth, the whole truth. He is a very sincere man himself, and will acknowledge it is for the best to speak precisely what one thinks."

"But *I* cannot tell him; that is impossible."

"Then I must," said Augusta, ringing the bell.

The servant who answered it said,—"Lord Castlemore had been gone a quarter of an hour; he found himself unable to eat, appeared very ill, and desired the footman to call a hackney coach, in which he departed."

The young ladies were alike struck by this account, but it was certain Blanche felt the information most painfully. After a moment's pause the servant added—"That their own carriage had been waiting a considerable time."

Augusta resolutely, Blanche reluctantly, descended, and in a few moments found themselves alike removing far from the two persons on whom their thoughts were employed in such a manner as to preclude all power of conversation. When they reached the friends who had been alarmed by their delay, the absorption in their

countenances, and the absence indicated by their manners, struck the anxious mother exceedingly, but she made no inquiries as to the cause. She trusted that when Blanche found herself in the dear place of her nativity, surrounded by the flowers she had planted, the children she had instructed, the poor she had nourished, and the books from which she had imbibed virtue and pleasure, the wounds of her heart would be healed.

It was now autumn, and poor Blanche felt as if her heart partook the characteristics of the season in its prognostication of approaching sorrow, whilst that of Augusta resembled it in the glow and richness with which her grateful feelings were invested. She was unquestionably a little afraid that her aunt might condemn her, and she dreaded Mr. Vining still more. "How is it," said she to Blanche, "that I feel more afraid of those whom I know to be kind and considerate than I was of my lady grandmother. whom almost every person feared except myself?"

"Two reasons may be given; the first is, because they are both more worthy of that deep respect you now call *fear*, the other arises from your own improved sense of your situation as a young, inexperienced person, who ought to seek instruction, and bend to reproof when it is given for your good."

"Then I am become humble; I may become tractable also. But surely, surely, they will not require me to give up everything?"



IX.

Learning Humility.

AT the moment poor Augusta made the last exclamation, she felt as if no approbation from friends, no ties of consanguinity, no advantages of connection or situation, could atone to her for the loss of a man, whose advantages of person and manners had made a strong impression on her senses when she saw him, and whose constant sympathy in her misfortune, and generous conduct since, had inspired perhaps a higher interest than she had formerly felt for Lord Castlemore. Like many other young women similarly situated, she concluded that there was but one circumstance that could ensure her happiness, but one mode by which life could be rendered endurable.

They were entering the park, and winding through a road which was partly avenue and partly open, displaying views of the most beautiful sylvan scenery, and distant glimpses of the house, which was of the style termed Elizabethan, with pointed turrets, a deep arching entrance, and bay windows, different from anything Augusta had seen before. She expressed warmly her admiration of it; and Blanche, whose eyes were swimming in tears of joy, gave direction to the coachman to stop at one point

of view, well known to him, very near the house, in order that Miss Livingstone might see it from thence.

"How beautiful! how ancient! my dowager grandmother would say; how aristocratic! It is indeed a noble and delightful home; and from this home you once apprehended I might have torn you."

"But from this home, at a very early period of our acquaintance, you declared I should not be torn by you, dear Augusta. May I never forget that!"

"I will say amen to that, Blanche; for you had need remember the little of good in me that your earlier interviews might be capable of registering. Since then my folly, pride, madness, have covered me as the ivy covers the tree that shelters us."

"But look to the right, dear Augusta; that is my flower garden. The alcove there is of my own contrivance, the shrubs of my own planting; but we cannot see it well in the carriage."

"Let us then walk up to the house, and we shall see it plainly. I shall enjoy the change exceedingly; and I can now manage charmingly with your arm and my crutch."

In another moment this was accomplished, and the carriage drove up to the door, where Frank Vining awaited its coming. On learning the ladies were so near, he bounded from the house to meet them, his slender frame now healthy and elastic, his curly hair waving in the breeze, and his lovely countenance beaming with delight, words of joy and welcome pouring from his lips, the very music of youthful happiness.

But when he perceived his beautiful sister leaning upon a crutch; when he read, as by a single glance, all her past sufferings and present helplessness, forgetting that it might be temporary—forgetting, too, that his

own sorrow might add to her weakness, he rushed forward in agony, crying out—"Augusta, my sister! my dear, *dear* sister! I cannot bear to see you suffer so much, indeed I cannot;" and throwing himself upon a vase in the path, burst into ungovernable tears.

"I do not suffer, dear Frank; I am much better, indeed almost well, and rejoice to see you so. Stand up and kiss me, my dear boy, and thank God who has restored us to each other."

As may be supposed, the poor boy soon became reconciled to the object which had appalled him when he was sure that his sister was benefited by its use; but Augusta herself was much affected with the artless demonstrations of love from one she had so cruelly slighted. Turning her glistening eyes to Blanche, she said, as if in answer to the thoughts which had so lately passed in her mind, "It is a great comfort to be so loved after all. My connections are so few, it is more excusable in me to look for happiness in a marriage connection than any girl I am acquainted with, but if I were deprived of that, surely Frank would supply a great deal to my heart?"

"Undoubtedly he would. I have no brother. My sweet Amedie (always most dear because most amiable,) would have been invaluable to me *now*. I shall want him here much more than I could do in London."

Augusta spoke not, but she recollected that it was by the loss of this brother Blanche became an heiress. She saw clearly, as she had frequently done of late, that although her cousin had not only that generosity which delights to bestow, but that fine taste which directs expenditure wisely and beneficially, yet that her heart, not her wealth, must be the source of happiness to her; that in proportion to the diminution of pride and its attend-

ant feelings of vanity and ambition, was that increase of benevolent affection and tender solicitude, which are the best characteristics of woman, and the surest evidences of religious principles, more especially when they are engrafted by religious culture.

"Oh, that I could be like Blanche!" internally exclaimed poor Augusta, as she had often done before, for she was sensible that much remained to be done in subduing her own mind—that it is far easier to make a great sacrifice and ensure surprise and admiration, than to wean our inclinations from objects of habitual influence, and temptations of hourly recurrence. In the hour of pain we have no desire for anything beyond ease. In that of languor we are tractable, even when petulant, for we feel our dependence. The pressure of debt, more especially to a young offender, is one of so humbling, indeed crushing a nature, that its simple removal includes all other blessings at the moment of relief; and by all these causes and motives, had Augusta been actuated of late. Her affection and gratitude to Blanche, aided by her debility, which for the present forbade any enjoyment beyond the comforts of an invalid, her unaffected penitence for past folly, and returning love for Mr. Vining and her brother, operating together on a heart naturally well disposed, and formerly well directed, rendered her not only interesting, but happy in her first renunciation of expected wealth. With returning strength and beauty, came a thousand wishes for the power of exhibiting, as she had been wont, in those gay circles, where she reigned so lately the admired of all beholders. More especially did she desire to appear well in the eyes of him whom she felt dear to her heart; and she naturally wished to shower on him all that she had ever expected to enjoy.

As, after all, she had really gained a noble addition to her fortune, and therefore would give him far more than he expected or desired, it may be said, "such thoughts were in themselves as foolish as the wishes arising from them were inconsistent with her first amiable resignation." This we must concede. But who would have been wiser, or more consistent, after such a disappointment, at twenty-one? and who amongst us, at twice her age, would not have clung with more pertinacity to that wealth, we all know to be the "God of this world," and should have felt to be our strongest hold on the respect and homage we only prize the more, when time and circumstance, seek to deprive us of it?

A little petulance and fretfulness, an exercise of undue power over Frank, and a perpetual extolling of India at the expense of England, clearly proved to Lady Beautree that the mind of her niece was not so much at ease as Augusta wished it to appear, and as she herself earnestly desired to make it. On observing this to her daughter, Blanche took the alarm, believing that her cousin was in fact grieving for the breach with Lord Castlemore, and lamenting her hasty and, to her own conception, indelicate acceptance of a person so nearly a stranger as Mr. Elliston, forgetting that a short fortnight had been the extent of her own first acquaintance with one who had apparently influenced every future day of her existence. It is true, that period was very different from an interview in a ball-room, even seconded by the eulogium of a friend; and perhaps few women enjoy a greater opportunity than such a period might afford, for investigating the mind and tempers of the man whom they promise to "love, honour, and obey." On this point, we can only say, "the more the

pity;" for two persons who are to come together for "better and worse," who are intended not only to suffer and enjoy together, to bear and forbear with each other, but so to walk in company through earth, that they may hope to meet in heaven, cannot be too well acquainted with each other, particularly with each other's faults and peculiarities. Many of these may be light in the eyes of some, who, either from a just view of their own feelings, or a peculiarly happy temperature, can overlook that which others may find a positive bar to happiness.

To return. Blanche loved her cousin; she knew her to be naturally good-tempered, and from the many proofs she had received of her ingenuousness, and her improved knowledge, could not doubt the uprightness of her intention, nor the increased humility of her heart, which she believed to be at this time piously inclined. Of course she sincerely pitied her for the secret uneasiness which retarded her improvement, not less than her happiness. In order to assist her to overcome it, from whatever source it might arise, she eagerly sought first to improve her health, in order that she might engage with her in all those plans for assisting the poor, which had formerly engaged much of her own time under the eye of her mother, but which had never engrossed so much of her heart as now. Driving Augusta in a garden-chair from place to place, interesting her in the pursuits of the laborious, the hopes, fears, and feelings, of the young, the sufferings of the sick and infirm, and the education of the children, seemed to open a new world upon her mind, and to give her an interest, to which she had been hitherto comparatively a stranger. "Not," said she, "that I ever refused to subscribe to anything in my life in London, when people asked me;

but the moment I had given the money, I dismissed the subject from my mind, not even caring whether it did good or not. Once when a poor woman came to thank me, I remember I thought only how plain she was, and never asked a single question about her sick husband, whom I had been induced to relieve. If I had done so, her answer might have drawn from me that further help, which was in half an hour melted down at Howel and James's; and perhaps the inquiry itself would have comforted the woman's heart."

"Undoubtedly it would. We gave nothing yesterday; yet I trust we communicated no small good. In praising Dame Teb's spinning, we evidently encouraged her to go on with it, despite the rheumatism; and I know perfectly well that by doing so she will not only get the work done, for which my mother will pay her, but relieve her terrible complaint."

"Yes, but you could not persuade her so, she is so stupid."

"Stupidity is a necessary accompaniment to ignorance. We should make allowance for this, and not expect figs of thistles."

"Oh, I can make it; for all whom I have been used to were people ignorant, of course, of all that we think, believe, or even desire; but then they obey implicitly, and that is so pleasant."

"Pleasant to our self-love, and therefore encouraging to our worst propensities. It must be very difficult to be truly humble in India, dear Augusta; therefore it is the more necessary that you should cultivate this virtue whilst you remain here. That it is one which requires cultivation, the manners of the people give proof; they do not yet give me credit for it. If you saw how different they are to my mother, you would

be aware that it is only for *her* sake, and as *her* daughter, that my visits are welcome."

"I thought you had always been among them, Blanche, and always done them good?"

"So I did, my dear. But there are two ways of doing the same thing; and without being conscious of it at the time, I fear that I have frequently given pain, even where I bestowed essential service. As very high gifts, without charity, are little worth, so does charity itself require the accompaniments of kindness, consideration, and delicacy, to render it as valuable as it ought to be, to either of the parties concerned."

"I don't see how the giver is to be benefited in any case. I can see very well, that 'rich gifts wax poor,' when given with haughtiness or coldness, in the receiver's eye; but I don't understand what you mean by implying a mutual benefit."

"Yes, you do, if you recollect the pleasure you felt last week in helping my father to stock James Dixon's little farm. But there are other advantages, besides the pleasurable emotions and self-satisfaction which affects the mind on such occasions—gratitude to God for the gifts he enables us to bestow, and humility of heart, arising out of it; for what have we that is not his gift? and how much less do we deserve it, probably, than those on whom we are permitted to bestow it?"

"You seem to me always trying to inculcate humility, Blanche, when we are alone, and opening our whole hearts to each other. But you do not talk about it in company, like the ladies who were here on Thursday, nor wear plain bonnets as they do; and though you hear the children their lessons in the schools, I observe you expect them to be very respectful. Perhaps you

are only on your road to that perfect humility Mrs. Elton and Miss Sandford are practising?"

"I trust I shall not arrive at it; for exceedingly do I fear 'the pride that apes humility;' and in assuming external meekness and singularity of manners and apparel, says, in effect, 'Stand off, for I am holier than thou."

"No, it is enough for you and me, Blanche, to subdue our own spirits, so far as we are able, and in sincerity of heart seek from God the power of submitting every unruly will and affection to him. We are far too young to become teachers of others, beyond our own circle of infants and dependants. To me you are the best of teachers, as well as the most skilful of nurses. How much better I am for being every day, and all day long, with you! But I am not at ease yet; I am in a state of continual anxiety about a certain person, as you must conclude. If he were less in my mind, I should be more able to think of my duties, and grow good like you, Blanche."

The cheek of poor Blanche glowed deeply. "Alas!" thought she, "I too am thinking too much of that same person. How far is my poor cousin mistaken in me, when she thinks me *good!*" But on this subject she had no power of explanation or confession; and they drove home in silence, even through a tract of woodland scenery, acccustomed to excite their warmest admiration.

X.

First Love Renewed and Ratified.

ON the evening of that day in which the conversation we have mentioned took place, Lord Beautree, after reading his letters, observed, "That not only Mr. Vining, but another friend, would be with them in a day or two."

"Any one known to me?" inquired his lady.

"You have seen him when a child, but not since. It is Arthur Elliston, the son of a widowed mother, whom you met at your sister's house. I have made many inquiries respecting him, which have been so satisfactory in their results, that I asked him down here for the remainder of the shooting season. Blanche is not fond of sportsmen, I know, neither am I aware that he is one; but as a motive for the invitation of a stranger, I named this diversion in my note."

As one or two of their neighbours were present, Augusta felt thankful to her uncle for thus mentioning a subject which was inevitably one of the deepest solicitude to her, since, although she had, in the first instance, in a manner bound herself to his future fortunes, she had yet suspended correspondence with Mr. Elliston during a certain period, in which she apprehended Mr. Vining would form an acquaintance with

him, or at least gain every particular connected with his conduct and character. It was therefore natural that she should have felt intense anxiety on the subject, which, so far as it was exhibited in her countenance and manners, Blanche had imputed to another cause. The joy which lighted up the eyes of Augusta whilst listening to her uncle, seemed to reach the very heart of her cousin, since, however strange it appeared, it was yet evident Lord Castlemore was not the cause of her past uneasiness. Lady Beautree read with a sigh the countenance of her daughter, which to her was an open book, for she had hoped, from her improved health and her perpetual efforts to amuse her parents, that she had conquered a predilection which might be injurious to her future happiness, and against which she had unquestionably long struggled.

"What can you possibly be doing with that large parcel of old newspapers, Blanche?" said Augusta the following morning. "I am sure I cannot settle to reading, nor, indeed, anything else, so I want you to talk to me. Nevertheless, I trust you will allow me to continue my occupation a little longer without interruption."

To give Augusta her due, she was as patient as any one could be, whose ear was caught by every sound, and whose heart responded to her ear, who, moreover, remembered well how she had looked in the full bloom of her beauty, and with all the advantages of dress, on the eventful night of her triumph and her fall, and dreaded her present appearance, under the disadvantage of a cap, still necessary to shade her disfigured brow, and the mourning she wore for her grandfather. No wonder she was induced, in a short time, to exclaim, "What can have induced you to become so fond of

newspapers? For a long time you regarded them with abhorrence, and never looked at them since we came into the country before."

"I had reason to be disgusted with them one while, as you know. I suppose I am like other people, angry with them when they give me pain, and grateful when they amuse me. I confess I have been looking into those of some weeks past, to see what has become of—of Lord Castlemore. Surely you must wish to know about him?"

"So I do. I should indeed have been uneasy about him, if my whole mind had not been occupied with somebody else, except when you sought to divert and instruct me. Have you found anything about him? Is he married?"

"Married! How could you think it possible that he should do anything so inconsistent, so unlike himself?"

"Why, to be sure, it is a little time in fact since he offered to marry me; but it is a long time since he loved me, I am certain, if indeed he ever did; but of that I have my doubts. When Elliston arrives, I trust you will see a specimen of a lover very different from his lordship, who was always discontented with me, and unhappy in himself. To be sure he had very good reason for both. But what does the paper say?"

"He has been extremely ill, which I feared would be the case. The rapidity of his journey, and the agitation of his mind, completely overcame him, and from what I can learn, has thrown himself into a fever."

"It was a truly happy thing that I was not in the drawing-room when he arrived. Between my gratitude for his generosity, and his pity for my affliction, the happiness of both would have been compromised by an affecting reconciliation and a hasty union. People of

sentiment are continually making mistakes of that kind, thereby rendering temporary feelings arbiters of their whole lives; and few were more likely to do it than we were. My grandmother often said, 'Every one likely to marry should carefully distinguish between a transient preference of the taste, a wandering of the fancy, or an emotion of sensibility, and that similarity of *mind* and *principle*, which is required for the union that must last for life."

"I am sure my grandmother conveyed much valuable advice in her maxims—she never gave me any on the subject."

"Why should she, when it was evident that you never intended to marry? Why else did you successively refuse two men, whom half the mothers in town were seeking to entrap? men, too, who like my Elliston, sought you when they expected you were about to be impoverished."

"They were both entitled to my gratitude, but neither of them awakened my affection. Surely it would have been very foolish to have left parents I so dearly love, and to whose happiness I contribute, to live with a man to whom I was indifferent, for no reason on earth."

"According to my grandmother, it would have been for the *best* of all possible reasons—an accession of wealth, to which you were accustomed, and of rank, to which your birth made you eligible. *Love*, she always assured me, was the last ingredient requisite in the matrimonial cup, since it rendered a woman too fond of a good husband for her own ease and freedom, and increased a thousand fold the miseries inflicted by a bad one. 'Look at the wife of the prime minister,' said she; 'what are the goods of fortune, fame, and wealth to her, who trembles for every cold he takes, is

in a tremor for the success of every measure he promotes, and wastes the very hours of his triumph in dread of failure or widowhood, though neither circumstance could affect her jointure? But, forsooth, she loves him —yes, *loves* him after seventeen years' union!'"

Blanche could not help smiling, for the curled lip and the intonation of Augusta were too faithful an imitation of the dowager, though she had rather not have done so; but before she could offer a remark, Augusta continued, "'Then there is the Countess of——. She too must needs be most wretched, by adding all the fondness of what your romance-writers call a "woman's tender constancy," to those which belong to her personal embarrassments. She was married for her beauty, and though of birth, had no fortune—no settlement. As he spends more than his income, she is kept in positive personal poverty—trouble enough for any woman; yet to this she perpetually adds the miseries of jealousy, the fears and anxieties, which—but I have no patience when I think of her. Love is very well for mothers, under certain circumstances, but ridiculous in wives.'"

"Don't mimic her, Augusta; it is not right."

"I won't, Blanche; neither will I believe her; for your dear parents offer proof that love is not the mere moonshine she said it was. You must observe, that by *mind* and *principle*, in dear Lady Beautree's vocabulary, were *wealth* and *rank* meant invariably. But indeed she altered many words completely; and when I did not comprehend them, imputed my ignorance to my Indian education. She called religion *fanaticism*, humility *meanness*, pride *dignity*, charity *extravagance*. No wonder I was puzzled and misled; for even connubial infidelity (which with us is an unforgiveable sin) was softened down into—"

usta's list of her noble relative's errors was cut by the arrival of Mr. Vining, who saw with great ction the establishment of his son's health and ıprovement of his daughter's; but he was de- r of Lord Beautree's opinion that she required a r climate. The affection with which she met nd the gaiety of her manners, only awoke more r his fears for her health. On learning from ause her vivacity was awakened, he became more ı the subject, and began to think that, after all, ion he had contemplated with disgust, as being ver, romantic, and beneath his step-daughter, be submitted to.

oon appeared, indeed, that Mr. Elliston was a man capable of "winning golden opinions" from l as well as the young. With the exception of ng "too much devoted to Augusta," Mr. Vining ınced him admirable and worthy, and one who do honour to the country he left, and be a g to that which received him. It will be readily ed that the young lady herself not only forgave ensity of his devotion, but frequently contrasted ı the more quiet attentions of Lord Castlemore, as, she observed, "a great deal too discriminating servant for a suitable lover to a young and giddy

t surely the approbation of one who is blind, is be compared with that of him who sees and ıes, but still prefers?"

rhaps not, dear Blanche. It would, nevertheless, y ungrateful to find fault with the evil we have res inflicted. May Elliston ever remain blind to ılts, and I will never accuse him of deficiency in tion."

"Say rather, may he see and assist me to remove them."

"That would be better, I grant—much better. But, someway, I feel that I shall never bear any monitor but you; for who, if they reproved at all, would be so gentle, and contrive to correct without wounding! There are some things which a friend can do, that a husband ought not to attempt."

"Never allow yourself to think so; for the friendship of marriage is its strongest tie. Surely the man to whom, at the altar of your God you promise obedience, is thereby invested with a right to guide you, not less than guard you? But you will listen, I know you will, Augusta, to remonstrance, should it be necessary, from one on whose sound understanding you can rely, and whose love you cannot doubt."

"I hope I shall, Blanche; but, alas! I have reason to doubt myself, after the proofs of self-will and arrogance I formerly displayed. When I lose you, I will at least take my husband in your stead, and do my best to fulfil his wishes. I am one of those plants which must cling to something."

This was indeed very evident to Blanche; and so fondly had this interesting girl clung to herself of late, that the expected parting appeared to her at this time the greatest affliction she had ever known. It was, however, so evident that the delicacy of her constitution brooked no delay, and that notwithstanding her decided preference of her own country, and her increasing love for the man of her choice, she inwardly mourned the necessity of removal, that both Lord Beautree and Mr. Vining hastened the preparation for her nuptials, in order that she might leave our unfortunate climate before the frosts had begun.

ady Beautree, the dowager, did not accept the in-
tion her son thought it right to offer, she having,
very respect, indeed, disowned poor Augusta from
ime she ceased to be the heiress of her favourite
The wedding was, notwithstanding, numerously
ded, and made, in newspaper phrase, "a great
tion" in that part of the country. After a splendid
ner, the bride set out for Deal, accompanied by
:he and Frank, and followed by Lord Beautree
Mr. Vining, who were anxious, as experienced
ns, to ascertain the extent of her future accommo-
ns. The Indian servants returned with her, a
nstance of great consolation to Lady Beautree,
although left at home to entertain a large party
:nds and neighbours, had with the utmost affection
ı part in every contrivance for the future comfort
e who had of late become exceedingly dear to her.
:esidence of about a week at Deal completed the
ıtage of the Indiaman, and satisfied the elders of
arty, not only as to the state of the vessel, but the
sity of the bride's removal, since every day in
ı she lingered on shore, rendered parting more an
t of dread. Although she beheld her husband
looks of confiding affection, her eyes were often
with tears. Frank also lost all his usual spirits,
Blanche, though calm, was evidently suffering
.. It was certain that the sooner the trial was
the better it would be for all parties.
e last evening on which they visited the ship, on
return in the boat, they lingered a short time after
ng, to watch the movements of a pleasure-yacht,
ı was approaching the shore, forming conjectures
who might be the owner, many men of fashion
ıg of late become possessors of similar vessels.

Frank, who now claimed the privilege of being always near his sister, on hearing a remark from his new brother on the subject, exclaimed joyfully, "I don't know whose the yacht may be, but I am quite sure Lord Castlemore is aboard her. Yes, there he is landing at this moment; I could know him among a thousand. I must go to him this very moment!" Suiting the action to the word, away he scampered to that part of the quay where the passengers of the yacht were disembarked; and in a few moments, to the surprise of the whole party, and perhaps not less to his own, Lord Castlemore was in the midst of them. "How strange it seems," cried Frank, who was not a little proud of having "hauled a prize," "how *very* strange that we should be standing together again in the place where we landed from Madeira nineteen months ago! But there are more of us now, for Augusta is married. We did not expect she would be Mrs. Elliston *then*, did we, my lord?"

Embarrassing as the question certainly was, it did not prevent his lordship from paying the usual compliments to the bride with graceful ease; and she, with great *naiveté* and sincerity, declared that no circumstance could have been so grateful to her feelings as this *rencontre*. "It enables me," said she, "to thank you most truly for all your kind attentions to me, which I assure you were communicated by my cousin, with all those warm encomiums they so justly merited, and enables me also, in some measure, I trust, to erase from your mind the impression my follies must have made upon it, the last time we saw each other."

"We have both suffered much since then."

"Yes. I was indeed promptly punished; but I cannot regret it, for I may say it was the cause—the——But

you too have been ill—I fear very ill, and the long journey you took so rapidly on my account probably occasioned your disorder."

"From that, and perhaps some latent causes, I had a fever, which reduced me exceedingly. A succession of sea trips have proved restorative. I now deem myself more than convalescent."

"If you wish to be quite, *quite* well," cried Frank, "you must go to Heathfield Park, for it is the finest air in the world, and Blanche is the best nurse in the world. She cures people both of their ailments and their faults."

Mr. Vining, to the great relief of her he praised, checked the loquacity of Frank by observing "that his daughter must not stand in the evening air."

They slowly walked towards the inn together, Lord Beautree engaging the stranger in conversation, under the idea that it would relieve the awkwardness he could not fail to experience; and on parting, he entreated him to breakfast with them on the morrow, after his niece's departure.

Blanche, exceedingly distressed by the pallid looks of Lord Castlemore, felt relief in having a legitimate cause for being low-spirited, and immediately sought her room; but her retirement was soon invaded by the bride, who, without noticing her tearful looks, exclaimed, "I am so glad I have shaken hands with Lord Castlemore, you can't think, Blanche. It is a happy omen for my voyage, and will relieve me from many anxious moments, because I do certainly honour him as a good man, and regret that I behaved so ill for his sake. Nevertheless, I love Arthur much the best, and I am exceedingly glad that we did not meet before, lest I should have been led to marry him, though, perhaps,

he would not have pressed me." Augusta spoke questioningly; but Blanche could not answer, therefore she continued to speak: "I have still one thing to say, and it is a shame that I have put it off to the last. My poor grandmother Denton—what has become of her lately?"

"She is very comfortable. Her son has regained his health, and obtained a situation in which he is profitably employed. I have sent her bridecake, gloves, and other matters proper, as your farewell present."

"Oh, how much obliged I am for your recollection and kindness! I should have remembered it myself at sea, and it would have teased me all the voyage. Though you are so young, you think for everybody, whereas I seem to expect everybody should think for me."

Poor Augusta's last confessions were cut short by a message from the gentlemen, entreating their company, and on this momentous evening it could not be denied. Yet few were the words that passed. Busy as was every heart in forming good wishes towards each other, and knitting more strongly the bonds of affection, which were meant to last for life, little could be said indicative of feelings so highly wrought. Even Frank sat silent, by the side of her he termed "*poor* sister Augusta."

We pass over the parting between the cousins. Each felt it acutely; but each found a source of consolation in the dear ones who remained to them. Frank observed, "that after all, a father was a very good thing;" and, like Blanche, he took refuge with his own.

"I could have wished," said Lord Beautree, when their first emotions had subsided, and they were meeting at the breakfast-table, "that my dear niece had married

mewhat older man, and one not quite so charmed
: her person and grateful for her preference. She
be always so influenced by those around her, that
)uld have wished her husband to unite the autho-
of the father with the tenderness of the lover."
lo should I," said Mr. Vining; "and young as he
do expect this kind of protectorship for her, in the
ble young man she has chosen, for his early life
been passed in a good school. Adversity and
rnal love between them have taught him many
ıble lessons, and he may communicate these to her
ıe very happiest medium. I trust the excellent
to whom I once hoped to have consigned the dear
, for child she always will be, is reserved to a
ier lot than that of nursing deficient virtues, estab-
ıg wavering intentions, loving that which is en-
ng, but solicitous for that which is unstable."
e entrance of Lord Castlemore put an end to the
ınt conversation, but it led to much that was
:able, particularly to Lord Beautree. He was pre-
r calculated for the offices of friendship in a pensive
. Although nothing was said that immediately
rted to his past situation with Augusta, it was
)nt that he did not shrink from any investigation,
r of his actions or his feelings; and also, that he
glad that she was so happily disposed of, since
Mr. Vining and Lord Beautree spoke in the
ɜst terms of her husband, though not without
emning the suddenness of the contract.
anche (her eyes still red with weeping) busied
)lf with the breakfast-table, and scarcely spoke,
Lord Castlemore said pointedly, "He hoped she
approved of the young man her cousin had so
ured?"

"Indeed I do. He seems a kind-hearted and prudent young man, and unquestionably he loves her tenderly. Indeed, he must love poor Augusta, she is so artless, so amiable—"

Blanche could say no more, for her heart was full; but before the carriages arrived which were intended to take Mr. Vining and his son to their future home in the neighbourhood of London, and convey Lord Beautree and his daughter to Heathfield Park, Lord Castlemore eagerly seized the opportunity of the absence of the gentlemen on some business to say: "Augusta told me, dear Miss Livingstone, that you had warmly pleaded my cause to her. May I confess, though perhaps it is very ungrateful, that the words have rankled in my bosom ever since? In fact, they have given me a sleepless night, and I cannot part from you without endeavouring to learn whether you were indeed in earnest in your recommendation, or whether the fair bride considered terms of praise necessary to alleviate my supposed mortification."

"I spoke only what I felt to be the truth at the moment. I thought that a man so considerate, so generous—in short, so capable of giving and forgiving, would make Augusta very happy; but she appeared at the time not willing to listen to me."

"Did you really wish her to do so? Were you *indeed* anxious to unite two persons so little calculated for each other?"

"I believed—I hoped that Augusta would, under your kind management, become—"

"Pardon me, Blanche; speak, I beseech you, to the point, for it is one to *me*—perhaps to both of us—of eternal moment. Did you, in your *heart*, wish me to become her husband?"





PRESSED TOO CLOSELY.

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"You press me too closely, my lord; I am not bound —to—to—to——I confess——"

"No! you shall not confess till I have declared most solemnly I *love* you, and have *long* loved you. It was not until after I had entangled myself by an engagement with your cousin, that I was aware of the extent of my passion, which from that time I determined to conquer. *After* that time, I learned also to esteem and admire you, as sincerely as I now fondly and fervently, I will not say *adore* you, for you would reprove me for such a term. If you approved that conduct in me, which was unquestionably the result of pity, and I may add generosity, yet surely you were aware of the severity of the struggle I was enduring. You see even now what it cost me."

"I do," said Blanche, as she turned away her tearful eyes, yet suffered her hand slightly to return the pressure of that which held it.

"You pity me, and undoubtedly blame me also; but yet whatever may be termed my delinquencies, in having offered to another that hand which ought never to have been separated, even in thought, from the heart, they are all before you. I will not say can you immediately pardon me, but can you give me hopes of pardon? I am capable of long and patient waiting, for I have known the misery arising from rapid conclusion, and impulses more amiable than wise."

"I had no right to direct them. I have nothing to forgive, nothing to reprove. All I can say is, that if you *had* married Augusta, I should have endeavoured to—dear Edmund, I don't know what to say."

The "*dear Edmund*" had said *all* his heart required. At this moment Mr. Vining entered to take leave; and Frank, with a grave face and blubbering voice, again

reiterated the praises of the Park, and advised Lord Castlemore to try it. An interview with Lord Beautree, in which long explanations were given, and important permissions requested and allowed, now followed; and although the lover did not return with the father and daughter, arrangements were made for his visits shortly afterwards.

In the interim, Blanche had shed tears of joy on the bosom of that beloved mother, who had been her anxious heart's sole confidante. Although Lady Beautree could not fail to rejoice in her daughter's joy, and had herself seen enough of Lord Castlemore to feel for him the sincerest esteem, yet she did not, to the sensitive mind of Blanche, appear to sympathize in her feelings fully and freely. There was a calmness in her manners, which fell chillingly on the more excited mind of one who had experienced so great a change in her sensations, and felt justified in taking hope, the long exile, once more to her bosom.

"You will soon know more of Lord Castlemore, dear mother, and you will then, I trust, approve of him entirely. At present, I see you think poor Blanche is too partial. I fear, dear mother, you are in some way disappointed by me. You distrust my judgment, or condemn me for giving way to my feelings."

"Not so, my dear child. The disappointment is rather from myself than any other person or circumstance. I am not yet sufficiently humbled, either by my trials or my reason; but I trust prayer may effect that for me which I need. The fact is, that I am weak enough to be mortified at the idea of your accepting a man, whom the world will say your cousin rejected. I shrink from the recollection of Augusta being apparently, if not actually, preferred to you."

"But, dear mother, I had been the cause of that very preference; my foolish pride virtually refused him, and my peculiar situation affected him. He wished to do *me* good, whether I deserved it or not, and I firmly believe, looked to a marriage with my cousin as the medium by which he could most effectually serve me. Besides, Augusta was then very pretty, and singularly interesting in her sincerity and simplicity."

"It is very true, my dear, and the sensation which for a moment fettered my spirit was altogether unworthy of me. It will have wholly passed by before Lord Castlemore's arrival; and I hope I shall meet him without the shadow of a prejudice on my mind. Nevertheless, closely must I investigate the character of him to whose care I devote my only child; but I trust pride will not assist penetration. Cheer up, my own dear girl, and forgive, in your mother, any remains of that temper of mind you have so admirably controlled in yourself. I offer you a proof of the truth of Young's assertion, that—

"'Man's joys are joys of warfare, not of peace;'

for it is too plain that I am still called on to fight, and I trust to conquer."

"Mother, *dear* mother, I cannot bear to hear you blame yourself—*you*, so self-subdued, so considerate, so gentle! if you are not quite contented, there must be some other cause?"

"There surely requires none; for a mother feels so keenly for her child, whether properly or improperly, that a slight wound of her pride will suffice to cast a shadow over her engagement; but having seen whence my pain arose, is, you know, an earnest of its removal, and the recollection of it only proves to us both the

necessity of the apostle's injunction—'Watch, for ye know not what spirit ye are of.'"

When Lord and Lady Beautree had themselves talked the matter over, and compared their own observations upon one who henceforward must contribute so much to the happiness or the trouble of their little circle, each became more easy in contemplating their daughter's removal. They felt, as parents only can feel, the anxiety which belongs to a change so important in the life of a young woman, hitherto treated with unbounded tenderness and confidence, and from her situation as an only child, unacquainted with the contentions arising from jarring interests and different tempers to be found in large families, and which in a certain degree prepare the mind for moving in a larger circle. It was, however, their comfort to believe that their child was likely to marry a well-disposed man, of sound principles and truly generous nature, and one to whom her heart had so long clung with so much preference, that they could not fail to rejoice that he had escaped "the shoals and quicksands" in which he had been involved, and was enabled honourably to become a member of their family.

Lord Castlemore still bore the marks of an invalid in face and form when he reached Heathfield Park; but it is certain, that although it was now the very depth of winter, he did very great credit to the good nursing and the pure air, for in a week or two he became quite another man, and Blanche herself saw in him a thousand graces and agreeable qualities, which had never been exhibited before. She had indeed never seen him but in seasons of great solicitude, first on behalf of the brother whom he so fondly loved, and afterwards on account of the misguided young woman

to whom he had incautiously pledged himself. It had therefore been rather esteem than admiration which had produced her attachment, which is unquestionably the best basis for love; but it was undoubtedly delightful to her to witness the unfolding of a mind so powerful, and manners so captivating, as daily to justify her choice to herself.

As it had long been the custom at Heathfield to observe Christmas as a season of rejoicing to all, and of especial assistance to the poor, Lord Castlemore remained there during that period, and warmly entering into every scheme of utility, endeared himself alike to Lord Beautree and his lady, their neighbours and dependants; thus forming himself for the station in society he was called upon to fill, as a man whose rank demanded example, and whose wealth was given by the Great Donor to be a fountain flowing beneficently to all.

But the rights of hospitality and charity yet allowed many hours in which the lovers retraced, with the deepest interest, the many circumstances and false conclusions which had obstructed explanation, and for so long a period demanded renunciation of each other as a positive duty. It was now a pleasure to expatiate on feelings which there had been a necessity for concealing, and to travel together through that course of events which had unfolded to each the principles, qualities, and religious views of the other. Both firmly believing in the providential care of an Almighty Disposer of all things, gratitude to God for their present position added the purest of all enjoyments to that which they experienced in the love and tender estimation in which they held each other.

Lord Castlemore did not return to his own house,

until he had by that silence which is not denial, that softened tone which throws into half-uttered words the eloquence of many, obtained from Blanche permission to prepare it for her reception. Fully and unequivocally was that permission accorded by her approving parents. They were now happily assured, that his union with Blanche promised as much of earthly felicity as frail humanity is entitled to expect, or perhaps ought to desire.

This short parting was alleviated to Blanche by a letter from Augusta, written at Madeira, which was not only highly satisfactory in the account it gave of her health, but the indications it gave of her happiness. Her affectionate recollections, and the increased steadiness of her mind, were highly satisfactory to them all. Naturally retracing her visit to England, and the train of circumstances which followed, Lady Beautree was led to remark, that in the first place they had been of so alarming a nature, yet had produced eventually so little change, that the whole affair appeared to her as one bestowed upon them all, not only as a trial, but an improvement of their integrity, temper, and benevolence. It would be, she trusted, more especially beneficial to the younger persons concerned, and was evidently so to her own dear Blanche, by adding to her many virtues the truly Christian virtue of HUMILITY.



THE

BEST BOY IN THE WORLD;

OR,

The Best Have Room to Mend.

GREAT was the distress of Lady Harriet Elmore when she received a letter from Colonel Elmore, her husband, earnestly entreating her to meet him in Italy, (whither he was travelling from India by the overland route), not only because she found that her beloved partner was in poor health and low spirits, but because the idea of leaving Edward, their only child, was exceedingly afflicting to her. He had been the sole object of her unceasing care, during more than seven of those long years in which his father had been absent, a period which constituted two-thirds of his life, and as he could not recollect that his mamma had ever left him for a single day, she dreaded the effect of her absence upon his mind, and could not sustain the idea of his grief.

Mrs. Bellaire, who had been her friend from infancy, and who lived within thirty miles, hastened to her on this emergency, and having read the letter, and calculated the time in which it was probable that the colonel would reach Naples, urged her to proceed immediately for London, from whence some friends of hers were at that time setting out for Rome, from whom she could insure her every attention. In addition to this kindness she likewise proposed taking her son home to her own house, where he would have the advantage of sharing the cares of an excellent tutor with her own two youngest sons, one of whom was the same age with himself, and the other a year younger.

The tender mother was also the affectionate wife, she saw clearly that it was her duty to take Mrs. Bellaire's advice and accept her offer, which she well knew to be that of a most admirable mother and excellent woman in every sense of the word, and after warmly thanking her, though with many tears, she proceeded to expatiate on the good qualities of Edward, to mention the progress he had made in his learning, to assure her friend that he would repay her kindness by the example he would afford her children, and that, in short, "he was the best boy in the world."

"Frank and Sinclair are tolerably good children," said Mrs. Bellaire; "they will, I am certain, be very kind to him; and I can say still more for the rest of the establishment, so that I am sure you may leave him to us safely; and as to fretting yourself so much about a child's sorrow, believe me (who know children better than you do) it is very unnecessary."

Lady Harriet only shook her head in reply; she felt assured that Edward was more attached to her than Mrs. Bellaire's children could be to either of their parents,

for this plain reason that his affections had been all concentred on one object, whereas they had many to love, and could therefore not be expected to love intensely. "Besides, it was not in the nature of things that persons of large fortune and numerous connections, who spent a part of every year in London, and were engaged with all the cares and pleasures of political and fashionable life, could cultivate the affections and take part in the feelings of their numerous family, in the same way she had done with her single darling. No, they would not estimate him justly, not understand him thoroughly."

Happily, with these thoughts came the recollection that at Bellaire Park he would find all the pleasures which fortune could bestow on a large scale, and which could hardly fail to surprise and delight him, as contrasting with the small and quiet establishment to which prudence and inclination had hitherto confined her ladyship; and with this idea full upon her mind she ventured to break the matter to the astonished boy, and prepare him for departing with her friend, who now undertook to arrange everything in the most speedy manner for her own far-distant journey.

Edward heard with great satisfaction about "companions of his own age," "pretty little ponies," on which he was to ride, "gardens full of all kinds of fruit," and even of a "good gentleman," who would teach him Latin, and show him on the map all the places where his dear papa travelled; he was ready to assure his mamma that he would never forget to "say his prayers, nor to give his pocket-money to poor old people, and get his lessons diligently;" but he could form no idea of doing anything without mamma being present to see him and to praise him. The shock of parting with her was so great that it seemed to overwhelm the poor child's facul-

ties; and this misfortune at last took place under such a paroxysm of sorrow that it required not only all the true friendship, but all the strength of mind Mrs. Bellaire possessed to witness it, and consider what an awful and troublesome office she had undertaken.

Sensible that sorrow, like all violent passions, must in time exhaust itself, she suffered the poor boy to cry on for the first twenty miles, and to sleep for the remainder of the way. Nor was she sorry to find that her own young ones were gone to rest on their arrival, as she hoped a good night, and the novelty of all things around him in the morning, would divert Edward's mind, so far as to soothe the acuteness of his feelings, without therefore lessening the affection he felt for his mother, and the regret natural to his situation.

Dejected and drowsy, the child, whose manners were at all times gentle, took quietly the food that was offered to him, and departed with unresisting steps and equal inattention to the kindness shown him; but as this could be accounted for by the mental excitement he had suffered, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Bellaire considered it as a fault, and they were happy in thinking that they should give their dear children a pleasant companion, whilst they materially assisted a suffering friend, who would never have had the courage to place her weeping boy in a school or with any less considerate persons.

"Have you not seen Edward Elmore yet?" said Mrs. Bellaire to her son Francis, as he entered her dressing-room the next morning, to inquire after her health and receive her caresses.

"Yes, mamma, I *have* seen him; he is a pretty boy, but very odd; he won't let Susan wash him, nor wash himself, till you come. He says you are to be his mamma till his own comes home again?"

"So I am, my dear; but surely Lady Harriet did not act as nurse-maid to such a great boy as Edward?"

"He says she always stood by when he was dressed, and he cries so, you can't think; it grieves me to see him cry."

"I dare say it does, Frank, therefore I would have you go back and persuade him to be more of a man in his conduct. He is in great trouble from his mamma's absence; therefore, if he should be cross and wayward, it is your duty to pity him, and be patient with him, and do your utmost to amuse him, recollecting that he has never had a good papa to instruct him and control him as you have."

Frank so far stimulated Edward's pride, as to overcome his sullenness and grief for the present, a circumstance Mrs. Bellaire rejoiced to learn, being aware that many faults are best cured by companions, and many habits best inculcated by example. But she had scarcely heard this good news when Sinclair entered, saying, "Dear mamma, Edward Elmore has brought all his playthings into my own place, and turned all my books out, and my drawing things, and everything I have; he says, mamma, that—"

"What does he say? You may speak the exact truth."

"He says that he always puts his things exactly where he likes at home, and that everybody does what he bids them. I did not like to tell you this at *first*, because it seemed so like a story."

"Your conclusion was very natural, my dear; but I am afraid Edward has had a good deal of indulgence; nevertheless, as his own mamma assured me he was a very good boy (indeed the best in the world), I expect to find him amiable; but we must make great allowance

for him, he has had no little brother or sister to share his playthings, or the place where he used them."

"He says he had all the house to play in at home."

"Perhaps he had, for I remember seeing the same things in the drawing-room which afterwards annoyed me in the coach."

"But that was not proper, mamma, surely?"

"Indeed, Sinclair, it was *not;* and I hope, before he has been long with us, he will cure himself of those bad habits which led to it; in the meantime we must pity him, and persuade him to think of other people as well as himself."

A third entrance from a servant, who said, "Master Elmore was crying dreadfully," hastened Mrs. Bellaire's visit to the children's apartment, where she found the sobbing child in great distress because he was left *alone,* in consequence of Francis and Sinclair having gone to attend their studies.

"I will take you to their schoolroom, my dear, and introduce you to Mr. Fairthorne, their tutor."

"But I don't choose to go! I won't learn of anybody but my own mamma. I told the boys so when they teased me to go with them."

"What can I do with this poor child?" said Mrs. Bellaire to herself, as she perceived the paleness of his cheeks and the redness of his eyes. "If I give way to his self-will the example will be ruinous to my own children, to oppose him thus early may injure his health, which is evidently not robust, his sorrow is so deep and silent, so unlike that of a violent and obstinate-tempered child, that I am really not more grieved than puzzled by him."

At length Edward rose from his chair, wiped his eyes, and said in a tone of quiet condescension, "You may take me into the garden."

"I have not breakfasted yet," said Mrs. Bellaire.

"That makes no difference that I know of; I got my breakfast long since."

"And did your mamma always go out with you when you asked her, my dear?"

"To be sure she did. I wish she were here now."

"I am very glad she is not, for she could not be happy if she were; she would see your red eyes, and know that you had been naughty, and that would grieve her; do you think you love her?"

"To be sure I love her dearly."

"I think *not*, for I have observed that boys who love their mothers try to oblige them. Sinclair and Francis know that I should be very unhappy if they were rude to others, disobedient to their tutor, or negligent in their lessons; and I am sure they love me, because they save me from pain. I would not believe anything they *said* if their actions disagreed with their words; nor would I yield to their wishes if I saw that they desired their own pleasure but did not value mine."

"I am not naughty, I always speak the truth, and I don't hurt anybody."

As Edward spoke his eye fell on those things which he had placed on a chiffonier, by ejecting the property of Sinclair Bellaire; he stopped, coloured, and began hastily to remove them; in which employment Mrs. Bellaire left him, and in the course of time her sons found him, as there was a struggle in his breast, which rendered the employment very indecisive in its effects —one minute he was on the point of resigning that which he had no right to usurp; the next, he resumed his imagined right of doing that which it was his pleasure to do.

Under the influence of pity for his present affliction,

the young Bellaires suffered him to take the lead in all those movements dictated by themselves; but since their rides and walks were necessarily under the control of their parents or tutor, some difficulties were for several days constantly presented by Edward Elmore's desire to go some other way than the one fixed upon, take any person's pony to which he had a fancy, and make a regular complaint against Mrs. Bellaire if she were not of the party.

The good-natured boys bore everything well save this complaint; but even little Sinclair could not forbear to exclaim one day, "Really, Edward, you seem to think my mamma should be your constant attendant, and had nothing to do but what you wished for."

"Well, so I do. Did she not promise to supply my own poor mamma's place to me, and did not my mamma do everything I asked her to do?"

"She must have been very silly to do what a boy like you bade her do, you must be joking; who ever heard of a parent obeying a child?"

"Or who," cried Frank, "ever heard of a child being so wicked as to think of *ordering* his parent?"

Poor Edward was on the point of weeping, but he had already found that the long fits of crying to which he was wont to have recourse had no effect on any one in his present circle, and in his anxiety to justify himself he appealed to Mr. Fairthorne, "whether it were not Mrs. Bellaire's duty to fulfil her promise?"

"It is doubtless her duty to act as a kind mother to you, my dear; and in giving you the same pleasure, and offering you the same advantages she does to her own children, everybody will think she fulfils her duty. Surely you must know that she has many much more pressing duties to fulfil than attending to boys of your

age? Mrs. Bellaire has a large circle of poor persons, to whose sorrow and sickness she gives constant care; she has, as you know, a great number of friends in the house, for whose comfort and amusement she is anxious; and surely her own sweet little girls must claim a portion of her time, to say nothing of the school she has instituted for the children of the village. As you are undoubtedly a thoughtful boy, it appears strange that you have not considered this matter."

"I only thought that I wanted her, because I love her."

"So do we love to have mamma with us," cried Frank, "and dear papa too; but we like that she should be happy with her guests, and also like very much that he should be busy with the election, because, when he is again made a member, he will do a deal of good in the parliament, I dare say. You are a very generous boy, Edward, you would give anything away to help your fellow-creatures, but you don't seem to know that a great deal of good may be done distinct from charity; it is the duty of such men as my papa to do it, and not to be always riding about with his own sons."

"Yes, I do know *that*, or why should my father risk his life in the East Indies? but I always thought *ladies* should give up everything in the world for their children. I am sure my mamma did so; she would not dine out with her nearest neighbour, for fear that I should want her at home again."

"In consequence of which," said Mr. Fairthorne, "with many good qualities, and great abilities, you have become unmanly and selfish, incapable of self-denial, and unequal to any act of magnanimity; and although you may never commit a great error, yet you will be a constant subject of trouble to your friends."

This was perhaps the first direct reproof the poor boy had ever met with, and it was therefore no wonder that his heart swelled for a moment with indignation, and the tears twinkled in his eyes; but as Mr. Fairthorne spoke in a tone of the utmost pity and kindness, and the boys forbore not only to make any comment, but even to look towards him, this angry emotion soon subsided, and he pondered in his mind on all that had been said, beginning to suspect that he was not quite so perfect as he had imagined himself to be, and much ashamed at being less manly and independent than boys of his age ought to be, more especially one who was the son of a brave soldier.

On returning home he could not rest till he had found Mrs. Bellaire; when, seizing her hand, he drew her away from her party, saying, "Pray tell me, what is the meaning of 'being selfish;' is it being covetous?"

"No, my dear, for very extravagant people are generally the most selfish of all others. The sin of selfishness consists of—"

"Is it a *sin?*" cried the boy in great agitation.

"Selfishness consists in not only loving yourself better than any other person, but in seeking your own ease, pleasure, or profit, at any other person's expense. It is of course a great sin against others, and also a sin against God, who has given us this commandment, that we should love our neighbours as ourselves, and do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and selfish people never do these things."

"I now remember one night, when Frank and me were going to play at ninepins in the nursery, and Susan was sitting there looking very pale, with a bad headache, he went away directly, saying, 'We would

not make a noise to disturb her;' I suppose that was being unselfish, was it not?"

"It certainly arose from an opposite principle, my dear."

"And when Sinclair hurt his hand with the trap-ball, and gave over crying suddenly, because little Emma was so sorry, I suppose he conquered his selfishness?"

"He might be said to do more; such conduct at his age is magnanimity; it combines fortitude with humanity."

"But you did not praise him for it, you only took care of his hand."

"I was really alarmed at the moment, the blood flowed so freely; therefore my first cares were for the hand. I could rely on my dear boy's disposition, and had seen too many proofs of its goodness to spoil him by applause; he knew that in my heart I must approve his conduct."

Edward had much to say still; but he cast his eyes towards a group of ladies, and thought to himself, "Perhaps they want Mrs. Bellaire as much as I do," and he silently made his first effort of self-denial, by relinquishing her hand and retiring to the study, where he instantly requested Mr. Fairthorne to give him a task, to which he applied with as much diligence as the anxious frame of his mind would admit.

The next day there were no school duties attended to, for a joyful holiday took place, not only through the house, but the country, Mr. Bellaire being elected for the county; and the company, together with the family, and a great number of the neighbouring nobility and gentry, proceeded to the city in a magnificent cavalcade to be present at his chairing. In addition to the rich who came to do honour to the friend they esteemed,

were a numerous company of his tenants on horseback, well dressed, with gay nosegays and bunches of ribbon in their hats; and after these came a multitude of decent poor men, women, and children, most of whom were similarly decorated, and to use their own phrase, "putting the best foot foremost," with joyful faces and gay tongues, that they might "see his honour in all his glory." All were proud and happy, all sympathized in the delight and the triumph of the day; and even Edward Elmore's pretty but pensive countenance, was dressed in smiles, when he received his hat, adorned like those of his companions with ribbons.

There were many ladies to accommodate, all of whom wanted to be as near Mrs. Bellaire as possible; she therefore, though with evidently some pain, told her sons and Edward that they could not share her carriage, but should go in the next barouche with Mr. Fairthorne.

"It is all the same to us, mamma," said Francis; but his late cheerful, open countenance showed an inward struggle.

"It is not all the same to *me*, though," cried Edward, poutingly; but he, too, checked himself, and mounted the steps of the carriage with hilarity, which increased as he proceeded. The novelty of everything around him on entering the city, and proceeding to the hustings, where bands of music were stationed, banners displayed, and immense crowds assembled, whose loud reiterated hurrahs welcomed the advancing carriages of their new member's family, operated on his mind as by a happy contagion, and he became as merry, if not as noisy, as any boy in that numerous assemblage.

Hitherto the slave of an ill-regulated sensibility, it was no wonder that as the scene advanced in interest,

the poor boy's spirits became too highly exhilarated, especially as he could not forbear considering himself immediately connected with the honours of the day, and the mingled emotions of pride and timidity which affected him by turns, added to the loud shouting, and the pealing of the bells, deprived him of all self-possession; and as he stood up in the carriage waving his handkerchief, those around were repeatedly obliged to warn him of danger, lest he should fall out.

He became quiet and attentive during the time he listened to Mr. Bellaire, whilst he addressed his constituents; but when the acclamations of applause were again poured forth, his spirits rose with the general feeling, and in the act of throwing up his arms, he lost his equilibrium in such a manner, that he would have had a violent fall upon the ground, head foremost, if Frank Bellaire had not grasped his legs, and held him by main strength until Mr. Fairthorne was enabled to assist him.

Mrs. Bellaire having witnessed the circumstance with great terror, caused him to be instantly removed to the carriage which she occupied, where he was obliged to sit still, and soon became sensible that he had not been ill used, when circumstances induced his excellent friend to place him in his late situation.

They all departed home in the most joyful disposition imaginable, Mr. Bellaire being then on horseback amongst his happy and grateful tenantry; but as his fatigue had been very great, when they were about a mile out of the city, Mrs. Bellaire and her friends so earnestly entreated that he would take a seat in the carriage, that he consented, observing, "That Edward could now return safely to his companions—the excitement was over."

Edward was indeed glad to go, for his heart overflowed with gratitude to Francis, whose hands, though trembling with their burden, had held him so kindly and so effectively; his troubles, however, on this eventful day were not over; for as Mr. Bellaire dismounted, a young man begged "to take his honour's horse, till the groom got up to the place;" and most unfortunately in the thoughtless hilarity of the hour, attempted to mount him. The noble animal, conscious of the change, plunged and flounced in such a manner, that in a few moments the young man was flung into the very midst of the advancing carriage, which was coming at a brisk rate to take up Edward Elmore.

Every one was terrified and grieved, expecting some very dreadful catastrophe, especially as they saw the boy, usually so fearful, run directly into the teeth of danger, by running to the spot where the young man was exposed to the risk of being trampled to death by the horses, if he were not already killed by the fall. All was for a minute confusion; but as the coachman was clever and sober, the horses were checked; the poor fellow crawled out dusty, frightened, and a little bruised, but able to drag away Edward, who hung upon him, crying in agony, "Where are you hurt? oh! where are you hurt?"

Thankful for the escape of both parties, Mr. Fairthorne took Edward into the carriage, soothed his alarm, and pointed out the utter insufficiency of any assistance he could have given to the poor young man, and the increased agitation he had occasioned to his friends; but not in a tone of blame, but kindness; so that the boy was fully convinced of the truth of his observations, and really sorry that he had been, twice in one day, the cause of so much alarm to that dear

though temporary mamma, whose pleasure he now sincerely wished to enhance. On their arrival at home, so strong was his impression. that he could not rest till he got up to her, and said, "he was extremely sorry he had been so foolish, and alarmed her so much."

Mrs. Bellaire readily accorded him the kiss of forgiveness, saying at the same time, "How happened you to be so near falling?"

"I had quite forgotten myself with joy, and so I suppose I jumped up, or something of that kind; all I know is, that Frank saved me—yes, saved my life, by catching hold of me just at the right moment."

Mrs. Bellaire gave Frank a look, at once conveying that praise sweet to the heart of a good child, and full of inquiry about the circumstances; to which he replied, "I saw very plainly, mamma, that Edward could not take care of himself; and knowing that he had never been used to it, poor fellow, I never took my eye off him, by which means I caught him. You know it was altogether a great confusion, though I never was so pleased with anything in my life."

"I am glad, my dear boy, to find that the confusion neither prevented your head nor your heart from performing their proper functions. But, Edward, my boy, though I can account for your adventure in the first instance, I cannot in the second; you really ran under the horses' legs, as if you meant to be killed."

"I quite forgot myself—I thought of nothing in the world but the poor man that was thrown. I did not remember that I was only a child, and could not help him, which I ought to have done."

"Well, my dear, don't be troubled about it," said Mr. Bellaire; "if you were a foolish boy, at any rate

Edward tried with good effect; by degrees he became active, energetic, independent, and yet modest, obedient, and every way tractable. When his parents arrived in England, his fond and anxious mother was astonished by his improvement, and particularly by that part of it which related to his temper and disposition, which it was certain her blameable indulgence had rendered a source of misery to them both. She now saw clearly that her friend was a far better manager than herself, and had performed more of the duties of her station, without neglecting any other; and often would she say, whilst confessing her past errors, that "the best have room to mend."

